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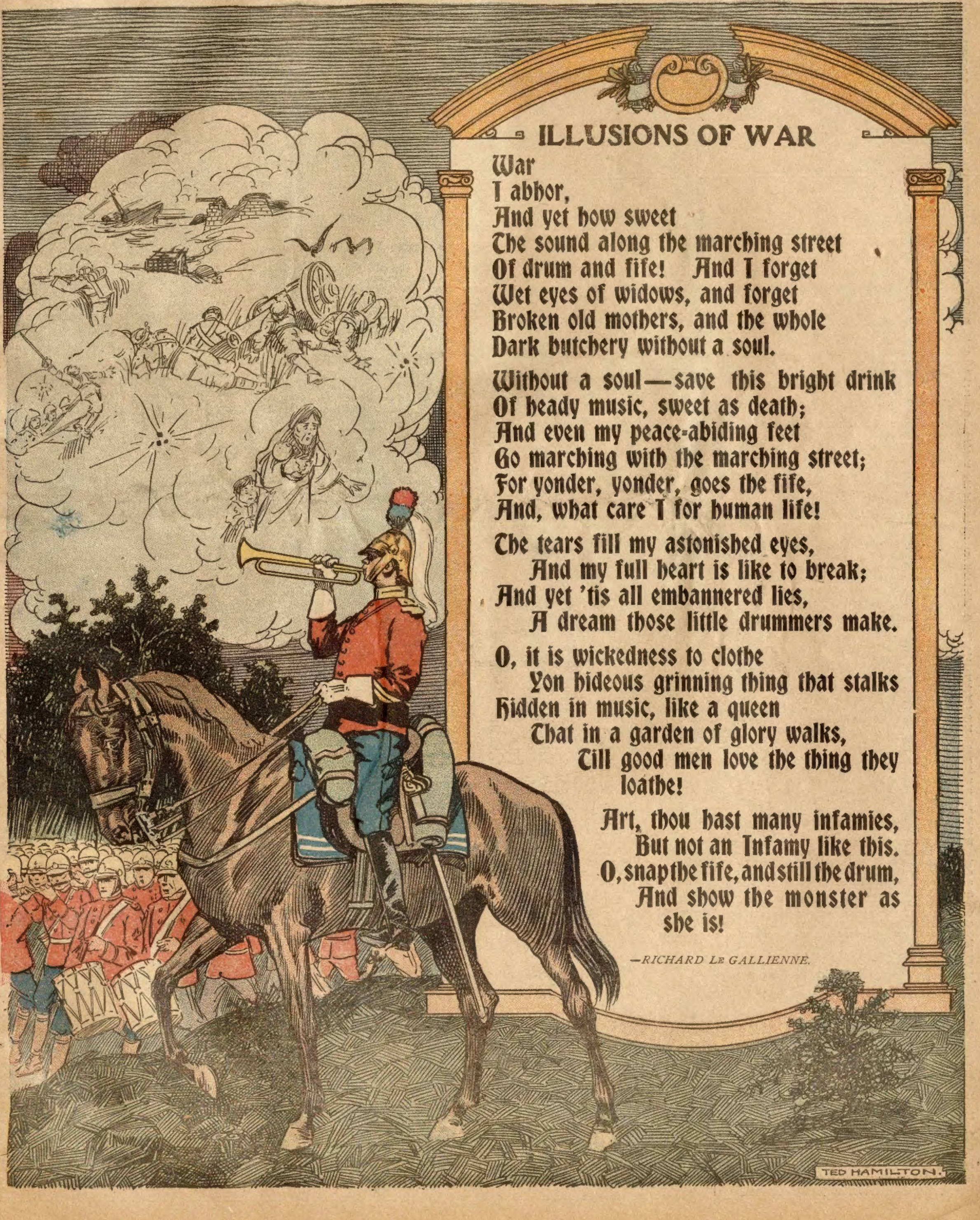
TED HAMILTON.

ILLUSIONS OF WAR

War
I abhor,
And yet how sweet
The sound along the marching street
Of drum and fife! And I forget
Wet eyes of widows, and forget
Broken old mothers, and the whole
Dark butchery without a soul.

Without a soul—save this bright drink
Of heady music, sweet as death;
And even my peace-abiding feet
Go marching with the marching street;
For yonder, yonder, goes the fife,
And, what care I for human life!

The tears fill my astonished eyes,
And my full heart is like to break;
And yet 'tis all embannered lies,
A dream those little drummers make.

O, it is wickedness to clothe
Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they
loathe!

Art, thou hast many infamies,
But not an Infamy like this.
O, snap the fife, and still the drum,
And show the monster as
she is!

—RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

The Purple Princess

Or, An Emperor's Last Love

By T. C. Harbaugh

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CHAPTER IX.

IN BLACK KARL'S NET.

RID for the present, at least, of her imperial lover, the Purple Princess thought of the danger that menaced Marc of Coblenz. The Emperor Francis would leave no stone unturned to get rid of the man who had won the love of the beautiful woman whom he had selected to share the throne with him. She felt that the rage of her royal adorer would find Marc and hem him in with peril. Francis had left Castle Marx in a towering rage, taking with him the body of Grimal of the Red Guard, who had been mysteriously strangled, supposedly by the Black Friar.

"Saddle my horse!" said the Princess to Dagobert, the day after the Emperor's departure.

"For a ride in the hills, mistress?" asked the menial.

"For a ride to Coblenz," was the reply, at which Dagobert's eyes dilated.

"Then," he ventured, "if Coblenz is your destination you will require an escort——"

"I want no escort but Paul," she answered somewhat tartly. "Paul is young, I know, but he can wield the sword."

"You will pass through the territory of Black Karl."

"What care I for that robber?" exclaimed Eudora, her eyes flashing and her bosom rising and falling like little waves at sea. "It is to Coblenz we go, Paul and I."

Dagobert bit his lip and turned away. In a few minutes Eudora's black horse was made ready, and a handsome youth of nineteen joined her in the court.

The warm sun had topped the nearby hills, and the drawbridge was lowered to let the couple out.

Dagobert, with evil look, watched the two steeds as they cantered toward the road to Coblenz, and then ascending to the battlements, he kept his eye upon them till the rising ground hid them from his view.

"I know," muttered he, "she goes to acquaint Marc of the Emperor's indignation. She will reach Coblenz before Francis can strike. Marc will be warned, and he may escape the imperial blow."

Once in the deep forest, Eudora bade Paul keep watch on every side, saying that they had now entered the domain of Black Karl, the robber baron who had vowed to make her mistress of his retreat, making the third lover who sought her hand.

"I will have the eyes of the falcon," responded young Paul, bowing to the lovely woman at his side. "I fear not the robbers of the Dark Forest, and, moreover, should they appear, I have a sword devoted to your service."

"A good blade that hath been tested, as I well know," smiled back the Purple Princess. "More than that, Paul, we have fleet steeds, and they will distance any of Black Karl's band."

For some distance the way led upward, and at last the summit was reached, a spot which overlooked the legendary Rhine, whose waves sparkled like gems in the sunlight.

Young Paul was nearer to the Princess than any of her retainers, and therefore at no time hesitated to address her.

"Was it not a singular occurrence?" he ventured, breaking the silence that had prevailed for some time.

Eudora turned from her survey of the entrancing scenery, and looked at his youthful face.

"The death of Grimal, you mean?"

"Yes, my lady."

"It was very strange, and then there was the lowering of the Emperor's flag. But you have seen something, Paul?"

"I have."

"Tell me," continued Eudora, leaning toward her escort. "You have watchful eyes, my boy. What did you see?"

"I caught sight of the Black Friar, my lady."

The Purple Princess laid her hand lightly on Paul's arm.

"Tell me all," said she, and then let the reins fall gently upon her horse's neck.

"It was not long before they found Grimal," resumed Paul, pleased with his mistress' condescension. "I was in the lower part of the castle. Suddenly there rose before me a figure that gave me a great start. It seemed to come out of the stones, so strangely did it appear in sight. It was habited in black, and the head wore a cowl. I could not see the face well, for it was hidden by the hood, but I watched the person all the same. When it glided away, I followed with noiseless feet, for I long have heard the legend of the Black Friar. Up a staircase it went, making no more noise than a kitten. When it reached the main battlement, I drew back and waited. I saw the Black Friar creep to the flagstaff, and what was my astonishment when I saw him deliberately lower the Emperor's banner? But for the dark shadow of the wall, I would have been discovered.

"In a few moments the Black Friar turned about, passing within reach of my sword arm, but, of course, I durst not stop him. Then for the first time I caught sight of his face."

Paul paused abruptly and seemed to shudder.

"Why do you not proceed?" asked Eudora. "You were going to tell me what sort of face the Black Friar has."

"The sight of it seemed to chill my blood," was the resumption. "I had never seen such a visage before."

Eudora tapped her horse's neck impatiently with her riding whip.

"It was the face of one long dead," Paul went on, recovering, in part, his color. "I cannot describe it, for I have never found the proper language. Surely, my lady, it was the Black Friar in person."

"Whither did he go?"

"That I cannot say. I lost him among the shadows."

"But you followed?"

"I must confess that I played the coward, for which I trust you will forgive me."

"I forgive you everything, Paul," smiled the Purple Princess. "I am willing to believe that you really encountered the strange being who is said to have lived as long as the Wandering Jew. I have seen him myself, but I must say that he then did not have the death mask."

With this conversation lagged, for Eudora fell into a state of abstraction from which Paul did not seek to draw her.

"Ha!" suddenly cried the youth. "Methinks I caught a sight of armed men over yonder."

At the same moment Eudora of Marx looked over Paul's outstretched hand, and then turned her gaze upon him. In another instant the youth's observation was confirmed, for three horsemen appeared in the road before them.

Paul laid his hand on his sword, but a look from his mistress kept him from drawing the blade.

"Lest us see what they want," said the Princess, still observing the trio. "Mayhap they are not dangerous," and then she rode openly forward with the fearless mien of her noble race.

By this time the men, who were dressed in rather fantastic costume, with dark feathers in their hats, had blocked the way and were waiting for them. Eudora and Paul pulled up in front of them.

"Halt!" cried the leader of the group, with a gesture. "Is not this lady the Princess Eudora?"

"I am Eudora of Marx," was the instant reply. "And you?"

"We are the kings of the Dark Forest."

"Ah, the men of Black Karl?"

"You have spoken well, lady," was the answer. "Whither goest thou with but a stripling for an escort?"

Eudora's face reddened with indignation.

"By what right am I stopped?" cried she, her lustrous eyes lighting up with scorn. "Make way for us," and she urged her steed forward, but it was suddenly checked by a hand that gripped the bridle rein.

Paul noticed the check and instantly flashed his blade.

"Unhand my lady!" he exclaimed, at which the three stalwarts laughed. "You dare not stop the Princess Eudora, and you shall not whilst Paul can protect her."

"Hear the stripling," snorted one of the group. "We dare to stop even the Emperor. We serve Black Karl of the Rhine lands, and——"

"Take care of your head," was the interruption, and the light weapon worn by young Paul described a circle dangerously near his head.

"Don't hurt the fellow," commanded Eudora. "Let him say why we have been stopped."

Paul put up his sword with reluctance.

"Our master would have speech with Eudora of Marx," one of the three proceeded. "He is quite near."

"But we must ride on," said the Princess.

"Not until you have seen our master."

The lovely face went suddenly white, and Eudora again faced the robber.

"Take me to Black Karl," said she, in fearless tones. "Show me the man whom you serve."

A narrow side path led from the main road and disappeared in the dense shrubbery nearby. Eudora's horse was led down this cramped way, a bronze hand at the bridle.

All at once the little company came out into a small clearing where there was a little camp. One of the three men blew a signal on a silver horn, and a dozen men seemed to spring from the solid earth.

"There is our master," said the leader of the trip, designating a handsome man who stood a little apart from the rest. "You are now in Black Karl's camp, lady."

The Purple Princess straightened in her saddle and surveyed Black Karl from head to foot. He advanced to meet her, sweeping his plumed hat near the ground as he bowed. The eyes of the couple met.

"Welcome to Black Karl's camp, my lovely Princess!" exclaimed the forest robber. "This is a meeting much to be desired on my part. The Dark Forest is my castle, and I am glad to entertain my lovely Eudora, than whom no fairer lady exists in paradise."

Eudora did not reply, but her haughtiness seemed to nonplus the robber baron for a moment.

CHAPTER X.

BLOOD WILL TELL.

UNDISGUISED pleasure and triumph sparkled in Black Karl's eyes.

"Do you follow his majesty?" asked the robber baron, suddenly. "I saw the royal train meandering through the Dark Forest but yesterday. The guest of Castle Marx did not tarry long."

"Perchance it was because he was not very welcome," answered Eudora, smiling. "To be plain with you, Black Karl, Francis was not invited to the castle."

"So I have heard," replied Karl. "It is whispered that his departure was hastened by a tragedy."

The Purple Princess started.

"There was a tragedy," she said, watching the robber's face. "But I was not aware that it had been heralded beyond the castle walls."

"News travels on speedy wings," laughed Black Karl. "The Emperor seemed to be bearing a corpse with him."

"He was taking Grimal home."

"Aha! so the captain of the Red Guard was the victim?"

"It was none other. But now will you not let us ride on?"

"I cannot part so soon with your pleasant company," said the robber, drawing nearer to Eudora. "I would miss you were I to let you proceed."

There was no mistaking the real meaning of these words softly spoken, for Black Karl could play the gentleman when so minded.

"But we must proceed," the Princess said, with emphasis. Her gorge was rising. "You have no authority to detain Paul and me."

"I acknowledge no master," came the quick response. "Black Karl is master here. You are on his ground, Lady Eudora, and he detains you because he loves you."

The tense face of the Purple Princess reddened. She sent a hurried glance at Paul.

"I had a wedding ring for your pretty hand, but I lost it in the brush I had with your menials not long ago."

"I found the ring, sir," haughtily exclaimed Eudora.

"Does it fit your tapering finger?" was the insulting query. "By my troth! I am glad it reached you."

"I cast it away!" cried the Princess, whitening. "Think you I would wear a bauble like it?"

Black Karl bit his nether lip beneath his sweeping mustache.

"I intended to present the ring in person," he returned, "but the leader of the horsemen, who grappled with us, caused me to drop it, and I lost the opportunity."

It was a strained chuckle which followed these words.

"Oh," Black Karl suddenly went on, "I fancy I can get another ring from the lapidary. I will see that the next one is of better workmanship, for, truth to tell, I did not much fancy the other."

"You need not bother the lapidary nor rob yourself of your money," Eudora was becoming bold again. "I need not your ring, Black Karl."

"Plain words plainly spoken," snapped Karl, glancing round upon his listening men. "I like a resolute woman, and one such just suits me for a bride."

"I am not looking for an altar," said the Purple Princess. "We will ride on, Paul."

The young escort picked up his reins and saw his mistress do the same.

But at that moment Black Karl threw himself in front of Eudora's horse and put out his hand to seize the bridle rein.

"Drop the rein, sir!" exclaimed the Princess, suddenly whipping out the slender blade that hung at her side. "I permit no forest robber to detain me."

There was a vicious snarl on Black Karl's lips and a sudden flash in his deep dark eyes.

"Desist!" the beautiful woman continued. "Eudora of Marx allows no incivilities," and with this she laid the flat of her sword with such force across the man's face that he dropped the rein and reeled away.

"Now, Paul," she cried to the youth, "if these brigands have the fleeter steeds, let them overtake us."

The robbers recoiled as Eudora spurred her horse through their ranks and in a second both she and Paul were flying up the narrow path toward the main road.

"Sound the battle cry of Marx," cried Eudora to Paul. "Let the rascals have it dinned into their ears."

Paul obeyed and out upon the crispy air the thrilling notes of Paul's horn sounded sharp and clear, the youth rising in his saddle as he blew the blast.

The Purple Princess was right gallantly leading the way with young Paul thundering behind her.

"What an angel!" exclaimed Black Karl, when he had recovered. "She's well worth the winning. Some day when I am her lord and master in Castle Marx, we'll laugh over this little episode."

Meantime his men were breathlessly waiting for his commands. Eudora was out of sight, but the hoofbeats of her steed still fell upon their ears.

"We must catch the bird," shouted Black Karl. "She's worth a golden cage," and then he sprang to saddle and led the way up the mountain road.

Once more in the main way, the Purple Princess gave her mettled mount the rein and urged him to still faster speed with her voice.

"Dost hear the beagles, Paul?" she cried over her shoulder.

"Plainly, my lady. They are in full cry, the dogs!"

"On, on, then. We will reach the White Castle if we can. Surely our friend Harl will give us asylum."

"I don't like him," came thorugh Paul's clinched teeth. "He is a betrayer of men, 'tis said."

"But we will try him," was the reply. "He dare not shut his gates to the Princess Eudora."

They rode together now, for the road was well adapted to such purpose, and soon they came in sight of a small castle set among a lot of trees.

"Yonder is refuge," cried the Purple Princess. "I see the flag of Harl above the little keep."

The castle, which was indeed very small, was fashioned after the more pretentious ones that stood above the Rhine. It had an outer wall, moat, and drawbridge, and above the keep fluttered a pennon of its master, a wild boar on a white ground.

Not far behind the fugitives galloped Black Karl and his minions. The face of the robber baron was flushed, for the blow given by the Purple Princess had fired every drop of his blood.

"They ride for Harl's stronghold," said one of the men at his side.

"Then we have them both," was the response.

The Princess Eudora reached the moat and shouted to those beyond.

There was no reply, and she lifted her voice again.

A head appeared on the battlement.

"Open!" continued Eudora. "We ride from the robber barons, from Black Karl and his vultures."

The head vanished and there was a rattling of chains inside the wall.

"Quick!" cried Eudora. "I hear the vagabonds behind us. Are you going to let Eudora of Marx fall into their clutches?"

The drawbridge fell tardily. The heavy gate of the castle followed in its opening, and the Purple Princess urged her steed into the little courtyard.

"Close the gate," she said to the one person who confronted her, a little man clad in gray, with a reddish cap set jauntily on his head. "They will be here in a minute."

The little creature did not speak for staring at the Princess, his eyes snapping like a basilisk's. The Purple Princess leaped to the ground and ran to the gate.

"Help me, Paul!" she cried to the youth, who was already afoot. "We must keep the robbers out."

Between them, the gate was closed, and then Eudora turned to Harl, who had not yet found his breath.

"I dare not resist Black Karl," he stammered, and his face was as white as Alpine snow. "He is all-powerful in this region."

"Though he were Beelzebub, he shall not enter here," grated Eudora. "Where are your men, Count Harl?"

"I gave the whole pesky lot a holiday but yesterday, and they will not be back for a fortnight. They are even now drinking wine in Coblenz and making love to the wenches there."

"But your gate is strong."

The man stuttered again.

"I dare not resist Black Karl, I say. He will raze my castle and take my life."

"I'll risk that," smiled Eudora.

"But, good mistress——"

"Put the point of your sword at that baby's face," interrupted the Princess, whirling upon Paul. "If he talks more treason, spit him as you would a mad dog."

Harl went pale to the gills and shuddered.

"I command here now," she went on. "There must be provision within the castle, for you are not the man to starve your stomach. Hark! I hear the beagles. They ride down the mountain even now."

Harl sprang toward the gate, but the point of Paul's steel stopped him midway.

"Black Karl will hang me to one of my pillars," whimpered the little man in his fear.

"If he gets inside, yes, but he is not here yet."

"For the love of the saints, Princess——"

"Silence, cur!" broke in Eudora, seizing him by the shoulder. "Another whimper from your craven heart, and I'll toss you headlong over your own battlements to the beast outside!" and she flung Harl from her to see him fall a shivering heap on the ground.

CHAPTER XI.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

THE White Castle, in which the Purple Princess and her solitary escort had taken refuge, had a history known throughout the entire region of the Rhine. It had its dark history, as all other castles had; it had withstood a number of fierce sieges, as its walls still showed, and there were secrets connected with it that were mentioned only behind stone walls or in the deep shadows of the towering hills.

Count Harl was noted for his meanness and also for his penuriousness. He was next to a robber, for he plundered his neighbors and boasted that he owed allegiance to neither man nor God.

The Princess Eudora knew all this. She had not hestitated to seek asylum in the White Castle, for she felt that she was more than a match for its villainous master, and it was much better to be there guarded by its ramparts of stone than in Black Karl's clutches.

"Where is your armory?" she demanded, when Harl rose to his feet after his tumble. "Show us to your weapons."

"I have none fit for service," was the growled reply.

"I will settle that question when I inspect them. Lead the way."

In the worst of humors, for he feared the woman inside and the man without, Count Harl beat down his enmity and tramped away with Eudora and Paul at his heels.

The armory of the castle was not large. The few weapons on the walls were somewhat antiquated, and brought a smile to Eudora's lips.

"Is that all the show you can make?" she queried, turning upon the little man.

"It is all. I am a man of peace, you know."

"What think you of it, Paul?"

The youth, who was handling a battle-ax, shook his head.

"Try the musketoons."

Paul went over to a lot of firearms, and picked them up one by one.

"They can be fired," he said, looking at his young mistress.

"And the swords?"

"Rather good for close fighting, Princess."

"Well," smiled Euroda, "we are not so bad off, after all."

At this moment loud shouts were heard at the moat, and Count Harl moved toward the door.

"Not yet," cried the Princess, springing after him, sword in hand. "Since you would cringe at the feet of Black Karl, I command here. The beasts want in. That is all, Count."

Harl stopped and frowned.

"I'll build you a new castle if Black Karl razes this one," continued Princess Eudora. "Let the robbers call in vain. Where are the dungeons and the secret ways?"

Harl took a bunch of heavy iron keys from the wall and threw it upon the table.

"Is there not a secret way underground from this place? I have heard rumors of such."

"There is a way, Princess, but——"

"Lead on to it," interposed Eudora. "Don't fear the wolves that howl by the moat."

The little Count bit his lip and opened a door in the wall disclosing a narrow stairway that seemed to terminate in the bowels of the earth. Paul found a torch, which he lit with his tinder box, and thrust it into Harl's hands.

From the foot of the stairway ran a dark passage which came to an end many yards from its beginning. An iron door here barred further advance.

"So this is the way to safety?" asked Eudora, with a glance at the master of the White Castle.

"It is, Princess."

"But it is too narrow to admit a horse."

Harl nodded.

"Now we will return to the light," pursued Eudora. "You will tell Black Karl that the White Castle is shut against him."

"And lose my precious head when he catches me?"

"I care little for your head," laughed the Purple Princess. "It is myself I am looking after just now."

By this time some of Karl's venturesome men had spanned the moat and were hammering on the castle door with their weapons. The din made the Count's teeth chatter.

"Mount to the port over the door and defy the beasts!" commanded the woman.

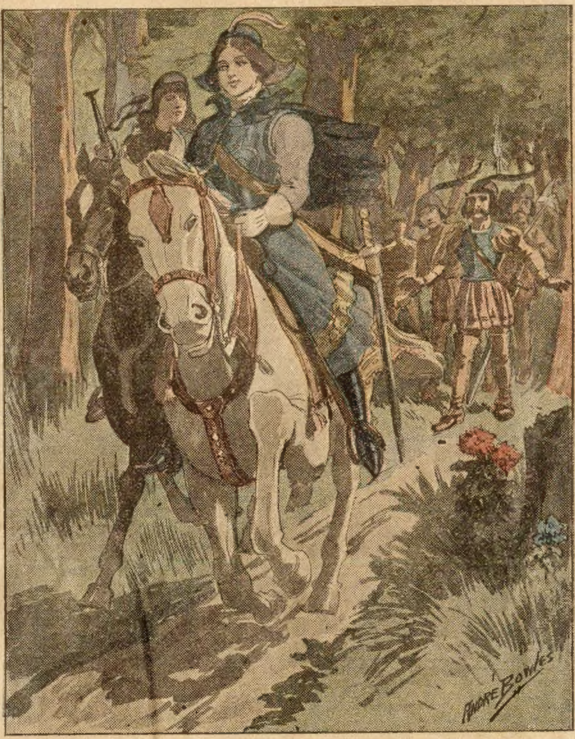
Harl ran nimbly up the ladder set against the inside wall, and looked out upon the scene at the moat. His forbidding visage was observed immediately, and Black Karl shouted angrily.

"Open the gate, Count. See you not that I am growing impatient? You try and old friend very much, methinks."

"I dare not oblige," came tne answer. "I have been, for the time, deposed."

Eudora and Paul exchanged smiles.

"We won't leave one stone upon its neighbor if you defy us. I will raze your castle and leave you hanging from a bough for the ravens to feast on."



"Sound the battle cry of Marx!"

"Mercy, good Karl! Don't you see that I am powerless?" whined the little rogue.

"Browbeaten by a woman!" sneered the robber baron. "Very well, Count. We'll break down your gate."

Harl descended and stood white before the listening Princess.

"You will make me a beggar," he gasped pleadingly. "I shall become poorer than Lazarus."

At this juncture Paul sprang up the ladder, and after one look alighted at Eudora's feet.

"They are cutting down timber to span the moat," he reported.

"My good trees!" groaned Harl, covering his face with his hands.

"Silence!" cried the Purple Princess. "They are apt to assault the gate, but there are the musketoons."

"And at least two good longbows," added Paul.

"Bring me one of them," said Eudora, and Paul flew to the armory, from which he soon returned with a bow and several arrows.

"I've brought down eagles with the bows of Castle Marx," Eudora went on, taking one of the bows from the youth's hands. "I will not miss a robber baron with a good shaft."

She mounted the ladder to the little port and looked out. Already a lot of young trees had been felled and were lying across the moat, forming a strong bridge. Black Karl stood not far off superintending the making of a battering-ram. He was urging his followers to rapid work by oaths and threats.

The beautiful woman drew back and fitted one of the slender snafts to the bowstring, then drawing the arrow to its iron barb, she leaned forward with sparkling eyes.

"My compliments to Black Karl," Paul heard her say, as the bowstring twanged, and had he been permitted to look he would have seen the feathered hat of the robber baron leap into the air, transfixed by the shaft.

"I might have made it his head," she said, with a little laugh, taking up another arrow.

"What!" stammered Count Harl, "have you dared to shoot at Count Karl?"

"Just a little reminder, my dear Count," smiled Eudora. "He can keep the barb as a souvenir."

Cries of rage followed the shot, and Karl commanded that the finished ram should be pushed at once to the assault on the closed portal. In another instant the first blow was struck. The heavy door trembled despite its powers of resistance. Harl, groveling on the ground, sent up cries of fear.

"If the reptile whines again, lay your sword across his face, Paul," said Eudora. "We will not have a fool to shatter our nerves."

Blow after blow was showered on the portal. The Purple Princess stood in the little court with compressed lips and flashing eyes. Her right hand gripped the hilt of her sword, and her gaze was riveted on the shaking gate.

"Why does Black Karl want you?" trembled Count Harl. "I thought he and you were friends, Princess?"

"This is the robber's wooing, my dear Count," grimaced the Princess.

"A warlike one, by my troth!" answered Harl.

All at once the thundering ceased. Something like a little ball came through the port and fell at Princess Eudora's feet.

She picked it up and unwound the cord that held it intact.

"A message from the enemy," she said with a glance at her companions. "Let us see what Black Karl has to say."

She turned to the stronger light, and her eyes for a moment fell upon the following:

"To Eudora of Marx: Count Karl of Germany gives you one hour in which to unbar the gate of the White Castle and admit him. If you refuse, he will take the castle by storm, leaving not one stone upon another, and, moreover, he will carry you to the altar, thus cheating both the Emperor and Marc of Coblenz in this game of hearts. It is the wise person who yields.

"BLACK KARL, THE COUNT."

Eudora looked up from the reading and thrust the message into Count Harl's hands.

"A pretty wooer, by my life!" she exclaimed.

"But you cannot refuse, Princess?"

"Cannot? You have yet to know the Princess Eudora, my friend," and writing on the back of the paper, she tied it to an arrow which a moment later fell quivering at Black Karl's feet. The answer was a shout of rage, and whirling upon the pallid master of the White Castle, Eudora said in her sweetest tones:

"Bring all your powder to this spot, Count. There will be no bride for Black Karl's altar when he gets inside."

CHAPTER XII.

THE ROYAL WOLF.

THE Emperor Francis, by dint of riding in the midst of the Red Guard, had reached, not his capital, but Coblenz. The lodestone which drew him to this famous city on the banks of the Rhine was the young man who had won the heart of Eudora of Marx. So eager was the Emperor to reach his new goal that he buried Grimal on the way, and urged his steed on by rein and spur.

Coblenz, ever loyal, received him joyfully, but he kept haughtily on after entering the city, nor paused till he was safe in the gorgeous abode of one of his most noted subjects.

His rage and chagrin had abated little. A scowl still darkened his features, and as he paced a handsome apartment, with tigerish strides, he now and then glanced out of a window and clinched his ungloved hands.

"To be put aside for a menial!" he cried, letting his anger have full sway. "I am not the Emperor if I cannot crush this worm. I am not Francis if I cannot win this haughty beauty of Castle Marx. Where will I find Marc of Coblenz?"

The sun was setting, gilding for the last time, that autumn day, the spires of tne ancient German town, and ever and anon to his ears came noises which he cared not to hear. Wine which had been set before him had been left untasted; his one passion was enough to fire his blood.

"Soldan lied to me, as I suspected," he went on, in the same heated voice. "He said he left Marc dead on the field, but the blows did not kill, and I find this human obstacle in my way. I shall deal with the liar!" He dug his nails into his white palms and shivered under the tempest of wrath.

At length he went over to the table and jerked a crimson cord which brought to his senses the clear notes of a bell. Almost immediately the door opened and a liveried menial made his humble obeisance.

"Your master!" snorted Francis, and the man was gone.

In a little while the owner of the palace made his appearance, and the Emperor darted at him like a wolf.

"Don't sit, Duke!" he snapped. "Toss custom to the winds. Dost know one Marc of this city?"

The Duke started.

"I know one who is called thus," was the reply.

"What is he?"

"He is the last of a somewhat famous line."

"Handsome?"

"You would give him such designation if you could see him, your majesty."

"Where is he to be found?"

"His house is near the river."

"Has he menials?"

"I believe he has but one, an old man named Hafford, a swordsman celebrated in his day, but now too old to wield the blade."

"It is well," cried Francis. "I could not wish it better." He came over to where the Duke stood and lowered his voice.

"You would serve your Emperor, Duke?"

"At all times and to the death, your majesty."

"I thought so. Art sure Marc of Coblenz is at home this day?"

"I caught a glimpse of him but yesterday."

"Then the bird is in the field, and I am the fowler. Canst show me where this young tiger lives?"

"I can, but your majesty's command would bring him hither."

"I will see him at home," pursued Francis. "Not as the Emperor, mind you, Duke, but as quite another person."

"But your garb——"

"I will exchange it for another. Your wardrobe is ample. Bring me the garb of one not titled, and let me make the change." The Emperor divested himself of his sword, which he flung upon a silken couch. "And with the suit fetch me the best blade in your famous armory."

Duke Dragamonte looked surprised. In a moment he was gone, but soon returned with garments which he placed before the Emperor.

"When one transacts his own business, it is well done," murmured Francis, turning over the clothes. "The garments are the very thing, and the sword looks good."

Ten minutes later the Duke was called back to the apartment, and found that the disguise was perfect. The Emperor looked for all the world like a moderate gentleman, and scarcely a trace of royalty was to be seen.

"Now for the little adventure," he observed with a smile, as he buckled on the sword. "Silence is true gold, Duke. They who serve me and keep tight lips shall be rewarded."

The pair left the palace and made their way toward the river. The night had fallen, and overhead glinted a field of stars. A breeze laden with song came

(Continued on page sixteen.)

Red Dick O'Laughlin

Or, THE CHIHUAHUA TRAIL

By Stephen Gaillard, Author of "Frontivard, the Terrible"

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CHAPTER V.

MY LADY SPITFIRE.

RED DICK O'LAUGHLIN, quite unconscious of the plot that was hatching for his discomfiture, had fallen into a brown study. "Who the devil were these errant damsels, anyway, wandering about in the wilds of northern Mexico, frightened by the eerie loneliness of the deserted town and the shadows of the night. and apparently quite failing to appreciate the far more real and terrible dangers by which they were surrounded, against which the darkness they feared had no doubt been to them as a shield? Miss Jennie, Miss Jennie, Miss Jennie! Why did that name sound so familiar in his ears? What echoes of his boyhood in God's country did it awaken? Miss Jennie, Miss Jennie!—a nickname of course; they didn't christen girls Jennie—a nickname for what? Jennie, Jennie—Virginia—Ah-h!" Red Dick's hand reached for the crumpled telegram.

A vicious squeal from Devil Dan brought him to his feet, and he leaped forward just in time to swing the girl clear of the iron-shod hoofs as they descended, and to strike the savage head aside as, with every gleaming white tooth bared, it lunged toward her.

"Ha! you devil! What in h—l do you mean?"

As Red Dick hurled the lurid question at the sorrel, his arm was around the girl whom he had just rescued from death. Devil Dan, fairly staggering from the blow, stood at a little distance with ears laid back, nostrils quivering, eyes gleaming, looking an equine Satan. Nancy, with one foot in the stirrup, shrieked and collapsed upon the ground.

The girl struggled to free herself from the encircling arm. "Let me go! let me go! How dare you? How dare you?" she exclaimed furiously.

Red Dick withdrew his arm as if the waist it encircled had suddenly turned to molten steel. He took a step away from her, keeping, however, between her and Devil Dan. "I—I—meant no harm," he stammered, "I—I——" Then suddenly he stopped, looked down at the girl, who was facing him with flashing eyes, looked at the sorrel, and when he spoke again his voice was composed and steady.

"So," he said, "trying to steal my horse, were you?"

"Sir!"

If Red Dick O'Laughlin had been a man easily crushed he would have been utterly annihilated by the scorn with which the lady regarded him. He was not, however, nor had the pathway of his life led him through drawingrooms, nor among refined women. He spoke like he fought, straight from the shoulder.

"What else do you call it?" he went on. "You were trying to mount Devil Dan, or he would not have attacked you; and the other young woman was trying to mount the next best horse. You meant to leave me with that broken-winded cayuse yonder. And what the devil do you suppose would have become of you if you had? Have you any idea?"

The girl's face was scarlet with anger as she answered him. "Well, what if we did? Why shouldn't we? We don't know who you are. You may be just as bad as or worse than the men we escaped from this afternoon. I begin to think all the men in this horrible country are cutthroats and desperadoes."

"Hoity, toity!" said Red Dick, looking down into her flashing eyes very much as a mastiff might regard a hen pheasant which had flown at him. "If you think I'm such a ruffian you're certainly shy on discretion, young lady. Let that pass, however. I'm not going to argue with you about it, because it wouldn't do any good the way you feel just now; but you've got to give me your word that you won't cut any more capers like you did just now."

"What if I won't?"

"Oh, well, if you won't, you won't, I suppose. I was just going foraging a bit to see if I could find some halfway comfortable place for you two to rest for a while, and perhaps some food a little better than dried beans and some forage for the horses, so if you won't give me your word to behave yourself, you'll just have to come along, that's all."

"I won't go!"

"Oh, well, don't!" said Red Dick. "Stay where you are and rest the best you can," and he resumed his seat upon the coping of the fountain and started to roll a cigarette.

Nancy, finding that no one paid any attention to her, had by this time scrambled to her feet, and came forward whimpering.

"Oh, Miss Jennie, I didn't never think you could be so heartless, no, I didn't! I m-might have f-fallen down d-dead with fright and—and you'd never k-know or—or c-c-care!" and Nancy sobbed.

"For Heaven's sake, Nancy, shut up!" exclaimed Miss Jennie, turning upon her furiously, perhaps glad to have an object less imperturbable than Red Dick to vent her anger upon. "You're just as much of a softy as my Aunt Agatha Frisbie, and as silly, and as useless in any kind of trouble!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" sobbed Nancy, "I n-never t-thought you—you'd s-speak s-such croo-oo-ll w-words to m-me, M-Miss J-Jennie, n-no I n-never t-thought it! Oh, oh, oh!" and Nancy's sobs verged on the hysterical.

With remorse as sudden as her anger, Miss Jennie threw her arms around the weeping girl.

There, there, Nancy, dear! I didn't mean it, indeed I didn't. You ought to hate me for my temper instead of loving me as you do. There, there, honey, don't cry any more! Please!"

Red Dick had sat watching the little scene, a whimsical smile twitching his lips. His eyes had opened wide at the mention of Agatha Frisbie's name, and he had reached for the crumpled telegram again.

"Beg pardon for interrupting," he said, as the two girls sat upon the ground clasped in each other's arms, "but you mentioned the name of Agatha Frisbie, and—and does your name happen to be Virginia?"

Miss Jennie looked up at him curiously. "Why, yes, but nobody except Aunt Agatha ever calls me by it."

"Then perhaps you can tell me the meaning of this telegram," he said, handing her the crumpled bit of paper. "It's been a riddle to me since I got it this morning."

The girl took the paper mechanically and unfolded it. "Perhaps I might be able to tell you the meaning of it if the moonlight was a little brighter," she said, getting upon her feet, "though I don't know what possible connection it could have with Agatha Frisbie or me."

"Oh, beg pardon, here's a match," said Red Dick, reaching in his pocket.

But the match was never lighted. Instead Red Dick let it drop from his fingers and whipped his Colt .45 from its holster. Nancy screamed, Miss Jennie, fearless woman that she was, gave a little shriek, and the color faded from her cheeks. O'Laughlin paid no heed to either of them, but stood listening. From beyond the plaza on ever side came the trampling of horses, the clink of accoutrements, and from half a dozen of the shadowy streets groups of horsemen rode out into the moonlight. They were surrounded.

CHAPTER VI.

QUINTIN BANDERA.

THE surprise was complete. Red Dick's glances swept the line of horsemen that encircled the plaza, then it rested upon the two women. For himself escape would have been possible—a dash across the plaza, a saddle emptied, and it would have gone hard with any Mexican who followed him into the labyrinth of lanes beyond—but the women—Red Dick slipped his revolver back into its holster. This was a case for neither fighting nor flying. Stepping out from the shadow of the fountain he shouted in Spanish for the Commandant. Several horsemen detached themselves from the encircling line and rode forward.

"I am the commander here," said one who rode in front, "and who are you?"

"An American."

"Oh, ho! a Gringo, you mean," said the officer, sneering. "And the women?"

"Americans also. They have a safe conduct from Colonel Chao, the Commandant at Juarez."

"So; and it is for them, I think, that I am looking. Ha! Nombre de Dios! Is it you?"

As he uttered the exclamation the Mexican reined in his horse and whipped out his revolver.

Red Dick made no move, but stood looking the Mexican squarely in the eyes.

"Yes, it is even I, Quintin Bandera," he said coolly.

The mutual recognition had taken place as O'Laughlin, in answering the Mexican's questions, had raised his head and the moonlight had shone full in his face.

The Mexican uttered a fierce Spanish oath. "I might have recognized you by your bulk, or by your devil of a horse yonder, even without seeing your face, had I not been expecting to see you at the Hacienda when General Villa sent me, as he has promised, to burn it, and bring you to him a prisoner at the end of a lariat."

"You see I have saved you the trouble," said Red Dick, calmly.

"Yes, but not deprived me of any pleasure," answered the Mexican, "for the Hacienda shall be burned just the same, and to General Villa you shall go—and at the end of a lariat. But these women, proteges of Colonel Chao's, let's have a look at them; I have orders to find them.

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Here, you men"—to several about him—"guard this fellow. If he makes a move to escape shoot him like a dog; but do not touch him. I wish that none but I should have the pleasure of putting a lariat about his neck." And he turned to where Miss Jennie and Nancy stood, the former pale, but cool and collected, the latter too frightened even to weep.

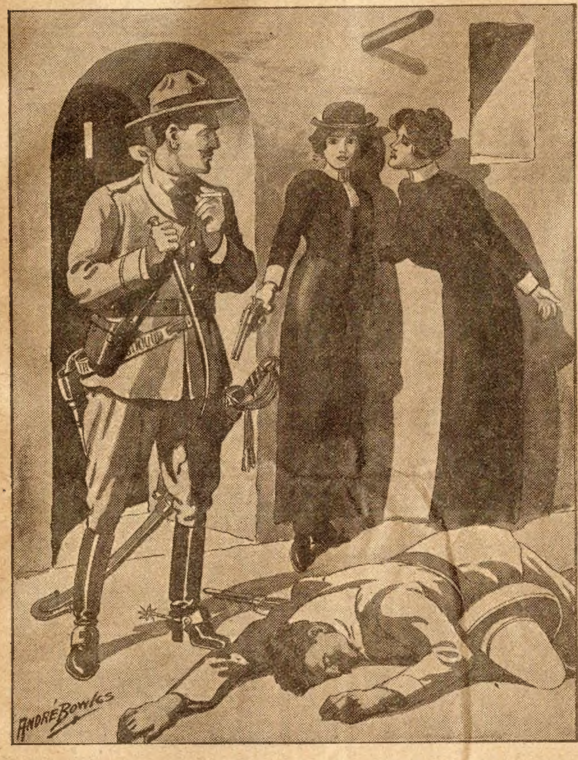
As the Mexican turned toward them he uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"Nombre de Dios!" he exclaimed "Is it possible? Miss Trevelyan!" and he leaped from his horse.

As Red Dick heard the words he started and turned around, muttering between his teeth: "Great God! Billy Trevelyan's daughter! Oh, fool, fool! What an utter and imbecile ass I have been!"

Virginia Trevelyan's voice was clear and gracious as she spoke. "I thought I recognized Colonel Lopez y Quesada," she said, "though I feared I must be mistaken when I heard him addressed by a name that common report in the United States makes infamous."

· The Colonel cast a malignant glance at O'Laughlin.



"That depends entirely upon yourself, Col. Bandera."

"That scoundrel yonder," he said, "addressed me by that name to discredit me with you, no doubt; but be reassured, dear senorita, Lopez y Quesada is now, as ever, your devoted slave."

The girl held out her hand frankly. "I am sure," she said, "I never needed a devoted slave more than at present. Your General Villa has arrested my father for some reason or other, which I do not at all understand; but I am sure if I can only secure a personal interview with General Villa that I can secure his release; and it was with that purpose that I left Juarez yesterday with a pass from Colonel Chao."

"Ah, yes; and the train broke down and you hired two men to guide you to Chihuahua, did you not? We heard of it, and General Villa sent me to your rescue."

"My rescue?"

"Yes, senorita; what you did was most imprudent. Ah, I see you do not know our war-torn Mexico. You were most fortunate to escape, and I do not at all comprehend how you did it. Oh, by the bye, was that fellow yonder"—pointing to Red Dick—"by any chance one of the men you hired?"

"No; we escaped from them by hard riding, but lost our way completely and wandered to this place, which seems to be deserted, and only met the man yonder less than an hour ago."

"Do you know who he is?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, though I fancied I was about to learn just as you arrived upon the scene."

"My dear senorita, my arrival was most fortunate, for it has been the means of saving you from absolutely the most dangerous bandit in northern Mexico."

"Good heavens! is it possible?"

"I knew it, Miss Jennie, I knew it!" said Nancy, who had recovered her courage and was standing beside her mistress.

"I must say I should not have suspected it," said Virginia Trevelyan, "though my maid here did; and in fact we made an attempt to escape from him just before you arrived and—and failed ignominiously."

"Ha!" exclaimed Lopez y Quesada, "if he has offered you insult, violence, he shall die—die by my own hand. His life is already forfeit for a thousand crimes, but if he has even so much as annoyed you, General Villa shall grant me the pleasure of being his executioner."

He was a medium-sized man, this Colonel Lopez y Quesada, thin, yet wiry and muscular. He was clad in khaki shirt and trousers, patent leather riding boots and sombrero, and had a red silk handkerchief knotted picturesquely about his throat. There was a dandified air about him, an almost feminine elegance, which did not prevent him from being one of the best fighting men in Villa's army. His face, with its bold black eyes, well-cut features, and black mustaches, would have been considered strikingly handsome, a type of soldierly beauty, but there was in it a sensualness and ferocity—qualities which had no doubt increased through indulgence since Virginia Trevelyan had known him in New York and Baltimore as a member of Madero's revolutionary Junta—which had made the name of Quintin Bandera—and that, by the bye, was his true one—infamous in the ears of those to whom had come some inkling of the horrible realities of Mexican warfare.

But to Virginia Trevelyan, who knew Quintin Bandera not at all, save by common report, he was Colonel Lopez y Quesada, whom she had known in the United States as an educated and charming gentleman, an accomplished horseman, a fine dancer. Her father's letters might have enlightened her, but she had never mentioned the name of Lopez y Quesada in her correspondence with him—never had given him sufficient thought, though the Mexican had made violent love to her before his departure from the States with Madero—and besides, since the fall of Madero and the beginning of the new revolution her father's letters had been few and far between. She regarded the dapper officer with sudden coldness, however, as she answered him:

"On the contrary, senor, the man has treated us only with perfect courtesy; in fact he saved my life from his horse, which is a vicious brute, when we attempted to escape; and," she added with marked and icy emphasis, "though military executions may be necessary under some circumstances, I should hardly have expected to find Senor Lopez y Quesada glorying in the role of executioner."

The Mexican's face flushed hotly: "Ah, senorita, you do not understand conditions in my unhappy country, nor do you know the crimes of this man; and had he offered insult to you, whom, as you know, I adore—ah-h! indeed you might pardon me for seeking his death."

"I pardon you, senor," said the girl, "provided you will spare me addresses which, however I might regard them under other circumstances, are ungenerous from you now; and provided you will conduct me to General Villa without delay."

With a woman's intuition the girl sensed danger in the ardent glances with which the Mexican regarded her, and brought her woman's tact into play. Not so Nancy, however, who whispered to her mistress with unnecessary loudness:

"Oh, Miss Jennie, isn't he a handsome gentleman? And so admiring."

Virginia flushed angrily, and only prudence prevented Nancy from receiving a stinging rebuke. The Mexican smiled as he turned to where the prisoner was standing.

Red Dick O'Laughlin had listened to the conversation between Virginia Trevelyan and Bandera with a variety of emotions chasing each other through his mind. He knew that if he made any movement which could be interpreted as an excuse he would be shot down in his tracks; he knew what good cause Bandera had to hate him; he knew that once in Villa's power his life would be forfeit unless he would consent to betray the trust his employers had reposed in him, and one of those employers was Virginia Trevelyan's father; yet his habitual hardihood was such, that he thought little, if at all, of his own danger. His one thought was of the girl, of Billy Trevelyan's daughter.

To what dangers a young and beautiful woman would be exposed in the midst of a licentious soldiery he knew well, and groaned as he thought how little the girl realized them; how futile was her hope of obtaining her father's release by an appeal to Villa he was well aware. Indeed, he did not doubt that the report of Trevelyan's imprisonment would be officially denied; and would not his daughter's importunity only add to the dangers he already ran? His one hope was that Villa would send the girl back to the United States.

As for Quintin Bandera, O'Laughlin knew his detestable character so well that had it not been for the evident previous acquaintance between him and the girl—when Bandera had apparently masqueraded in another name and a respectable character—and Villa's orders that she was to be brought to Chihuahua in safety, Red Dick would have wrested a rifle from one of the Mexicans—for he had been disarmed—and shot her dead where she stood rather than that she should remain alive in the miscreant's power.

As Bandera turned toward where the prisoner was standing, the latter's attitude betrayed not at all what was passing in his mind. With his arms folded across his broad breast and head held high with nonchalant bravado, he looked as unconcerned as if his own life and others' safety had not been trembling in the balance. As a matter of fact, he was weighing the question whether to make a desperate attempt to escape, or remain quiet and allow himself to be led prisoner to Chihuahua; and the deciding consideration was—in which way would he have the best chance of rescuing the girl. His insolent attitude enraged Bandera, who strode up to him furiously.

"Dog of a Gringo," said the Mexican in Spanish, "were it not for General Villa's orders I would have your heart's blood here and now, but by ——!" and he swore a blasphemous Spanish oath—"I will drag you to him at the tail of my horse, your food shall be the dust of the desert, your drink the sweat of your own vile carcass, until you cringe like a cur at my lightest word."

Red Dick surveyed the Mexican with calculated scorn. "Yelp, coyote, yelp!" he said coolly. "You're safe enough so long as the steer is tied!"

"Vile pig!" exclaimed Bandera, "be silent when I speak!" and striding close up to Red Dick, he struck him in the face with his open hand.

It would have been as safe to have struck a wounded panther. With a hoarse oath the red-bronze giant sprang upon his assailant, picked him up bodily before he could draw a weapon, and hurled him to the ground. So quickly was it done that the peon soldiers, taken by surprise, had no chance to raise their rifles, or realize what was happening, before Red Dick had reached the sorrel. A young officer sprang to intercept him, revolver in hand, only to have the weapon wrested from his grasp and to be felled by a herculean fist, never to rise again; half a dozen rifles cracked, but with fatal effect only to the Mexicans—two peons rolled from their saddles, one dead, another wounded. Vaulting into the saddle, Red Dick, with supreme hardihood, paused for a brief instant—paused long enough to see Bandera stagger to his feet and yell a hoarse order to shoot the Gringo down. And then, realizing that he had not killed the Mexican Colonel, aid that he was not leaving Virginia Trevelyan to the uncontrolled vengeance of the soldiers, he wheeled the sorrel around and dashed across the plaza, sending a bullet through the brain of one trooper and hurling another from the saddle who tried to intercept him, and with half a hundred more thundering behind.

CHAPTER VII.

DIRE PERIL.

VIRGINIA TREVELYAN had witnessed Bandera's insults to the prisoner with an indignant flush mantling her

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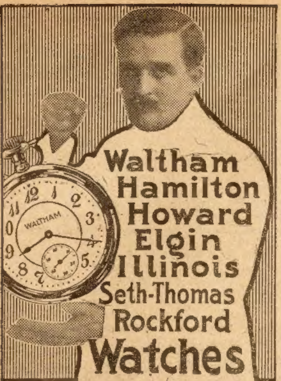

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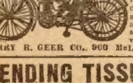

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cheeks at the cowardly blow, and with a thrill of fierce joy that was scarcely feminine at the daring and prowess of her countryman. Bandit he might be, but the girl came of fighting stock, and in her eyes personal bravery covered a multitude of sins. Then through her mind flashed a comparison between the red-bronze giant and the man she knew as Lopez y Quesada, and she called herself a fool for having distrusted the former. Her heart sank as some inkling came to her of the Mexican's true character and she realized the perils by which she was surrounded. Suddenly her hand sought the crumpled telegram which O'Laughlin had handed her, and which, upon the appearance of Bandera and his men, she had slipped into a fold of her dress.

Why had he seemed to think she would be able to explain its meaning? Was he a bandit after all? From beyond the plaza came shots, shouts, sounds of pursuit and search, and her heart thrilled within her. God grant he had escaped! God grant, if he were an outlaw, he might gather a band to rescue her from these Mexicans! She knew he would if it was in his power; and then—then she would ask him to rescue her father from Villa's hands. Suddenly in the girl's mind the man she had at first, in her ignorance, distrusted, had taken on the character of a paladin to whom nothing of daring or magnanimity was impossible.

Her reflections were interrupted by the voice of Bandera. The Mexican had suffered no injury from his overthrow save some severe bruises, though it had been some time before he had been able to stand upon his feet without staggering. Furious at his own humiliation and Red Dick's escape, all the evil passions of the man were released from restraint, and his eyes flamed as he looked upon Virginia.

"Senorita," he said, "I shall camp here until dawn, and I have directed that quarters be prepared for you in one of the empty houses facing the plaza."

"Very well, senor," said the girl, calmly, "my only desire is to reach Chihuahua and the presence of General Villa as soon as possible."

"That is my desire also, senorita; but the horses need rest after a hard day's march, and you yourself I think could hardly travel farther without some repose after the fatigues you have undergone. Permit me to escort you."

The man's voice was calm, but his glances made the girl shudder. In them Lopez y Quesada, the polished if unprincipled man of the world, was submerged, and Quintin Bandera, the licentious soldier, shone uppermost. It seemed to the girl as if a great gulf had intervened between the moment, before Red Dick's escape, when she had recognized the man as a friend and social equal, and the present. Without a word she walked across the plaza by his side with Nancy, trembling and silent, clinging to her arm. The maid did not whimper or complain now; unworldly as she was, she recognized dire peril in Bandera's altered attitude toward her mistress and in the loathsome glances of the peon soldiers.

Before the house to which Bandera was conducting them lay the bodies of the three men killed in the late affray, and Nancy shuddered as she looked at them. Not so her mistress. As if by design she walked so close to them that the skirt of her riding habit brushed against them. One of them was the young officer whom Red Dick had felled and in one of the two holsters at his belt—which had not been removed—gleamed the butt of a revolver. Bandera was a little in front of the two women, and for a moment the three of them were alone. Suddenly stooping above the officer's body, Virginia Trevelyan drew the revolver from its holster. So quickly was the act done that Bandera was entirely unaware until, turning at the door of the adobe hut, he saw the weapon glittering in her hand.

The Mexican's eyes flashed with admiration—admiration that was insult.

"So," he said, "the honor of Lopez y Quesada is not safeguard enough for you, lady?"

"Not when Lopez y Quesada is transformed into Quintin Bandera," said the girl, looking him squarely in the eyes.

The Mexican laughed. "I compliment you upon your penetration," he said, "assisted though it was by your Gringo friend—may the coyotes gnaw his carcass!—addressing me by a name somewhat better known than that of Lopez y Quesada. Oh, well, I should have thrown aside the mask of my own accord, anyway. But what will you do with the weapon, lady?"

"That depends entirely upon yourself, Colonel Bandera."

"Well answered," said the Mexican, insolently. "I love a gallant girl, and—and I love you to madness."

The girl gripped the revolver more tightly. "There are six cartridges in this weapon, senor," she said quietly, "and the last shall be for myself."

Again the Mexican laughed. "Bold words! bold words!" he said. "I have heard many others utter such. But enough! For the present I do not choose to use my power to press my suit, because General Villa has ordered you to be brought to him in safety; but when you have served the purpose for which I think he wishes to get you in his power, I know he will not refuse such a trifle as a Gringo girl to one of his best fighters."

The girl's face flamed at the insult and for the moment she forgot the danger in which she stood.

"General Villa will not dare!" she retorted hotly. "Such things may happen to Mexican women, but I am a citizen of the United States."

"General Villa will not dare! When you meet him you will realize that there is nothing he does not dare! and as for the United States—bah! all the world knows the Gringos are afraid of us."

Rather tardily the girl remembered the peril of her position and checked the reply that trembled on her tongue; but in her mind rose the image of the red-bronze giant, and she thought exultingly how little at least one Gringo was afraid.

The Mexican, interpreting her silence according to his own mind, thought that she was in some degree cowed. "Your quarters are here," he said, waving his hand toward the door of the hut. "I think you realize the futility of attempting to escape, but in case you should be tempted, I will inform you that my sentries will be posted on every side, and the attempt would only result in physical restraint being placed upon you."

Upon entering the hut the two girls found some blankets thrown upon the sod floor, for notwithstanding the torrid heat of the day the night was cold. From the fact that Bandera had made no attempt to force or to cajole her into giving up the revolver, Virginia judged that she was indeed safe for the present; nevertheless she did not sleep, and dawn found her wide-eyed, sitting upon the earthen floor beside Nancy, who had fallen into a troubled slumber.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this most interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

It Sounded Queer.

The following letter from a leading German newspaper was at one time received by one of our big American dailies:

Esteemed Gentlemen—An issue of your excellent paper of the date of Oct. 23 contained, under the heading, "Election Returns," the following statement:

"As the count proceeded, it became evident that Brown had been scratched repeatedly by the women voters."

The above situation not being entirely clear to us, kindly afford us enlightenment on the following points:

1. Where was the count going?
2. Was he German?
3. What had Mr. Brown done that the ladies should desire to scratch him?

Thanking you kindly in advance for the desired information, we beg to remain

Very truly yours,
THE EDITORS.

* * *

Not So Great.

Sir Robert Ball, the famous English astronomer, whose death occurred a few months ago, used to tell a little story of an experience that he had when he was at the Dunsink Observatory. A farmer came to him one day and asked if he might look at the moon through the telescope.

"Surely you can," said Ball. "Come around tonight and I shall be very happy to let you see it through the telescope."

"Can't I see it now?" asked the farmer, surprised.

"I am sorry that you cannot," said the astronomer. "You will have to wait until night."

"Huh! Then your old telescope is not so great a thing as I though it was!" cried the man, relieved from his illusion. "I can see the moon at night without it."

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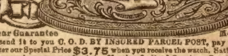

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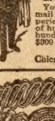

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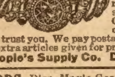

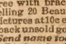

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Sold at Auction

Or, One Woman's Fate

By Annie Brownlee Quimby

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Begun in No. 32, August 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XV.

THE cold, dreary months of winter passed, and summer, bright and beautiful, spread its green mantle over the world.

Sir Richard had asked Dorothy to come to London for the season. To dance, gossip, entertain, and assume all the light frivolities that society demanded, to plunge into fashion, luxury, and extravagance. She thought of it all with a sickening horror.

Her youth and all that was brightest and best in her seemed to have died with little Dick. When left alone to brood over her sorrow, that old, terrible expression that had so alarmed Lady Althea would steal over her face—the fear of self and unnatural restraint.

One day a letter arrived from Max Eager that roused Dorothy out of her lethargy. The letter was so full of love and sympathy that the great tears welled in her eyes and ran down her cheeks. At first her heart gave a great glad throb, as she read it. It is sweet to be loved by those who are dear to us. But a moment later recollection came, and into her heart stole a great horror of herself, that she could for one moment forget and rejoice in his love. Lady Althea observed her unusual agitation, but pretended not to notice it.

Presently her eyes were dried, her voice steadied, and a look of determination settled over her face. She scanned her friend's face intently for a few seconds, then said:

"I am going to ask a great favor of you, Althea. You have been such a stanch friend in the past, I feel I can trust you in the future. Mr. Eager will be here this afternoon. I cannot see him, I dare not. If you would receive him for me, you would confer a lasting favor. If you will read that letter, it will explain much which I cannot tell you."

She handed Max Eager's letter to Lady Althea, then moved to the window, that she might not see the varying expression on her friend's face.

"Dear Dorothy," Lady Althea read, "I can see your look of grave displeasure when you receive this letter. But you will forgive me when you remember how lonely I am, how empty my life has been since I lost you.

"Your recent trouble makes you dearer to me than ever. The longing to see you is intolerable. Sometimes I think my reason will leave me if I cannot see your face once more. Only the other day I donned hat and coat and walked to the depot determined to take the first train to the Grange, but a good angel—or sometimes I think it was an evil one—prevented me.

"I have only to close my eyes and imagine you by my side, as in the happy days of old. I can still feel the touch of your hand on my arm, and your voice rings in my ears even yet. I sometimes wonder if there is another voice on earth that can thrill my soul and calm my restless heart as yours can. Sometimes, when surrounded by gay comrades and in the midst of reckless dissipation, your sweet face rises before me, and it seems as though gentle, loving hands drag the cup from my lips. Then comes reality, and the constant ache at my heart, the unavailing regrets and longings.

"It is hard, Dole, oh, so hard! to have things thus. Therefore I have decided to leave England, but I cannot go without seeing you once more. I know what you would say—'that it is very wrong,' but I have arrived at that stage where I don't care. I must and will see you! I will be at the Grange tomorrow afternoon to bid you farewell. Once more I will clasp your hand in mine and listen to the voice which is earth's sweetest music to me.

"I suppose it is very wrong, very wicked, for me to speak like this to you now, but somehow my life seems all wrong. But there! I must cease, before I say something you might find hard to forgive. You know how selfish, how headstrong, how impulsive I always was, and I fear I have grown more so with years. I will stop right now, and live only in anticipation of seeing you within the next twenty-four hours.

"Yours now and forever,
"MAX."

Lady Althea read the letter through twice, then sat thoughtful and silent for some minutes. The strange fear she felt for Dorothy at the time of the child's death came back to her now with tenfold force.

"Well," Dorothy said, when the silence had become unbearable, "I suppose you condemn me utterly?"

"No," her friend replied, "I pity you exceedingly." The expressive eyes were very tender and soft, and there was the sound of tears in her voice.

"You will see him for me, then?"

"Yes, dear, I will see him for you."

"You are so good, so kind, I don't know what I should do without you, dear Althea."

"I know, I understand. I think you have chosen a very wise course in refusing to see him."

"I dare not do otherwise. Oh, Althea, you don't know what it is to be tempted as I have been! Had little Dick lived, it would have been easy enough to keep in the 'straight and narrow path.' The touch of his little hands about my neck would have been an infallible talisman against evil."

"I understand, dear. But you are not so helpless as you imagine. You have great will power and determination; you are not impulsive or hasty. I feel sure you will conquer the temptation, and be nobler and purer for it. It is easy to be good, you know, if one has never been tempted."

"I don't know. I hope you are right, but I have a sickening horror of the future. If he would only stay away it would be so much easier to do right," she moaned.

"Yes, it is unfortunate that he does not. It is very selfish, very unmanly of him to force his presence upon you."

"You don't understand Max. He is so hasty and impulsive, but withal so kind and generous. I sometimes think that no one but myself ever understood poor Max."

"Nevertheless, it is despicable for him to place you in such an embarrassing position. He is thoroughly selfish, and thinks only of himself. A true man would have more thought for your feelings."

"I cannot defend him for what he has done, but I love him too well to condemn him utterly. You are very hard on him. You forget how desolate his life is, how empty. We were once so much to each other."

"God knows I, of all people, have no wish to be hard on any one. There is none so good but he might be better, or none so bad but he might be worse. We must not condemn our weaker brother. For how small, how insignificant our best may seem in the sight of the divine Judge. Have we given Him all he has a right to expect from us? No one can judge another's life by his own experience. There are so many different influences in different lives that it would be utter folly to set any standard by which to judge our fellow-creatures. Each one must use the judgment God gave him and be guided by the wee small voice of conscience, and he will not go far astray."

"But it is so hard to keep in the straight path sometimes. Those who are anchored by love are safe from temptation. But the anchorless, those for whom life has no charm, no pleasant prospect to look forward to, they soon fall under the scythe of temptation."

"My dear Dorothy," Lady Althea said, very softly, "have you ever noticed on a dull day how quickly and unexpectedly the sun will break through the clouds, and all is bright and beautiful in God's world again?"

"Ah, I know what you mean, dear, but no sun will ever break through the clouds in my life," Dorothy answered pathetically.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE drawingroom of the Grange Lady Althea paced the floor impatiently. She had been waiting for Max Eager for the last hour. She had persuaded Dorothy to go for a walk in the forest, lest they might chance to meet if she remained in the house, and thereby bring about the very thing she had planned to prevent.

Dorothy wandered into the forest and sat down. She was too heartsore and troubled to attempt a walk through the beautiful old wood, or to enjoy the beauties of nature. She was thinking of the years that were past, thinking of the time when she was a happy, carefree child, when she and Max used to chase the butterflies and pick flowers in just such a beauty spot as this.

That was before her mother's worldly ambitions began to interfere with her happiness—before Sir Richard came on the scene with his title, his wealth, and his princely estates. That was before her mother conceived the idea of setting a price on her head, thereby freeing herself from all poverty, all worldly care for the balance of her days.

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ard. She could never quite understand that. She had never encouraged him, never bestowed a happy, trusting smile upon him. Yet he would have her for his wife, and, as could only be expected of such a marriage, soon tired of her. Then Max Eager returned from Canada, and her real misery began. Afterward her baby came, and for a little while she was happy in the companionship of her child. Then the cruelest blow of all fell. Here she gave a weary sigh, and the great tears began to roll down her cheeks.

The sound of approaching footsteps roused her. She hurriedly dried her eyes, and peered curiously through the trees. A stalwart, dark-clad figure was approaching. There was something about the broad shoulders and well-poised head that sent a happy flutter to her heart. Then the chill of winter wrapped itself about her, a terrible dumb despair crept over her, for the moment paralyzing every faculty.

What horrible fate was planning her destruction? What evil angel was at work to throw her into the clutches of temptation? Oh, for the strength of Samson, that she might arise and flee! Happiness was within her grasp, but at such a cost! She must be strong, she must resist. She must not let his love tempt her out of the path of duty. In the few seconds she stood there watching the advancing figure those thoughts flashed through her mind.

"My God, Dorothy!" Max cried, pausing abruptly before her. "I thought you were safe at the Grange. Why did you not stay there?" he cried wildly.

"I did not care to meet you, Max, so I came out here. Lady Althea was to see you and explain." She was pale, her voice tremulous.

"My God! and I thought to come here and walk off my mad longing to see you, and fate itself has thrown you in my path! I regretted my selfishness in compelling you to see me. In one of my better moments, I decided to remain away. I thought I could wander here alone till I could get a train back to town. Leave me, Dorothy. Leave me while the better impulse is upon me. After a while it may be too late." His face was ghastly and twitched with terrible emotion.

"Max, I can't! Oh, I wish—I wish you had not come! But you will leave me, you will go away? See, I am trembling so I can hardly stand," she pleaded.

"I vowed I would not go near you. I kept away from the Grange, but you see it was no use; fate was stronger than you or I."

Dorothy's heart was rent asunder by the fierce pathos of his voice. She felt more keenly than ever that her weakness had wrecked two lives entirely, and her whole soul was filled with anguish and with dread.

"I have decided to leave England. The only possibility of peace or forgetfulness for either of us is to put oceans between us," he went on, coming to a tree by her side and leaning one arm against it. "We must be all or nothing to each other. Friendship will not suffice. I, being desperate and reckless, and you good and pure and womanly, there can be no question of what the result will be."

"Good and pure and womanly!" Dorothy cried, with sudden vehemence, the blood surging to her face. "Had I been that I should never have played with temptation one single minute. I sinned when I listened to your entreaties to see me again. I should have sent you from me then, and not weakly yielded to temptation. Meeting can only increase our misery. We must part." But the thought dimmed her eyes and chilled her blood.

"Yes," he replied, very unsteadily, very gravely. "There can be no distance too great to set between us. My God, to think what might have been! I never realized before the terrible meaning of that beautiful poem. How well it suits us, Dorothy;

"'Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

"Yes," Dorothy answered, piteously, "life is largely made up of mistakes. Had I but known, had I but been strong, how different things would have been. Yet something tells me that time and the consciousness of having done right will yet bring consolation."

"As far as I am concerned, if I am doing right now it is from no good motive, I assure you. If by word or look you said 'stay,' there would be no more parting this side the grave for you and me."

His voice was very low and quivered with love and restrained passion, but she heard every word. All the wild love and longing, all the tender feeling for the man who should have been her husband, the weariness and emptiness of her life, seemed beating like battering-rams against the poor, weak barriers of honor and duty.

"I would give much to be able to say 'stay,'" she cried, a great wistfulness in voice and eyes. "But Max, think of the tomorrow that would be sure to follow. Sin and remorse would haunt our lives, and cheat us of our anticipated happiness. Is life or love worth one's eternal ruin?"

"Love can be no sin," he answered, passionately. "My love would last you through life and through death, of that I am assured. Whatever my faults may be, inconstancy is not one of them."

"Right and wrong are set plainly before us. I have tried to keep to the straight path, though I have sometimes wandered off. I cannot, I must not, forget duty and honor. If I could cast those things aside and think only of our own selfish love, ask yourself, Max, would your love be what it is now, as constant, as pure?"

"No, it would not," he replied, thoughtfully. "Though you have made me suffer as man never suffered before, yet I would not have your honor tarnished by my selfishness. That is why I came to say good-by."

A sudden mist of tears dimmed her eyes. It seemed as if all around grew cold and gray, and an impassable barrier of ice stood between her and any hope of future happiness.

He stood facing her, white as death, a great anguish and a greater despair in his dark, mournful eyes. She looked up and met the look of love, anguish, and despair in his eyes, and her heart went out to him with a sudden, wild impulse that she could not check or restrain.

"Oh, Max, tell me what I should do? I cannot bear to see you suffer like that. Oh, Max, I pray that God will be merciful to us both!" Her hands were extended toward him, her voice was broken and full of unutterable anguish.

"If you wish for God's mercy on you, don't talk like that! I would save you if possible, but I am only human. Reproach me, scorn me, but don't tempt me with your sorrow. Let me go now, while I have strength, while the good fit is on me. It may not last, you know, and then——"

One long look he took at the sad, tear-stained face; then took her hand in his, and drew her to him, closer and closer. She trembled like an aspen, but did not resist. Her eyelids drooped, her lips quivered.

"May I—kiss you just once? It will be for the last time," he whispered.

She did not answer; speech seemed to have deserted her. She only remembered that the man she loved was bidding her an eternal farewell.

There comes such a moment of forgetfulness into the lives of all women whose love is misplaced. Otherwise there would be none to fall for love's sake. It is easy enough to be virtuous when we have never been tempted, never tried.

The anguish, the entreaty gladdened yet dismayed him. In this moment he knew that he held her fate in his hands, and she seemed so utterly unconscious of it. One tender word, one fond caress, and he knew he could not answer for himself—for her.

It was the critical moment of Max Eager's life. All that was best in his nature was warring fiercely with that which was worst. He was wrapped in a flame of temptation that was hard to resist, that threatened to burn away all noble, self-sacrificing thoughts, all good resolves, and that was fast stifling the faint whispers of a conscience that pleaded for the woman he loved and would save from herself.

It was the one weak moment in an otherwise strong life, and Max Eager knew it as such, and his good angel whispered:

"Save her from herself. Keep her spotless and pure, unharmed, untarnished by the baseness of selfish passion, an object worthy of love, as lovable as in the glad, sweet days of old."

While these thoughts were flashing through his brain, he gazed into the soulful eyes and read their unconscious betrayal.

His face paled to the hue of death. He dropped her hands and stepped back. One long, mournful look he took at the sweet face that he had grown to love so madly, and with a sigh that was almost a groan he left her.

He was frenzied with pain, with love, with a wild longing to return and clasp her in his arms, and to defy the world to part them. One word, one look, and his strength would have snapped like a reed. He would have cast honor to the winds, and the fair name of the woman he loved would have been dragged through the mire of scandal and shame, while two lives would have dragged out their days in bitter regrets and unavailing remorse.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE shadows of twilight were gathering over the Grange before Dorothy, pale and exhausted, made her appearance.

Lady Althea had waited patiently for Max, but he did not come. She had grown very uneasy about Dorothy, and as the evening wore on, and she did not appear, her uneasiness gave place to positive alarm. She was just about to dispatch the servants to search the grounds and the forest, when Dorothy came slowly across the lawn toward the house. She ran to meet her, fear and alarm

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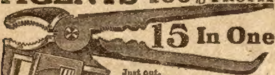

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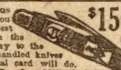

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struggling in her heart, for it was such a pale, dejected little figure that her heart ached for her.

"My dear, what is it?" she asked anxiously. "Has anything happened? You look positively ill."

For a moment Dorothy hesitated. Then the sight of the sweet, anxious face melted the ice about her heart.

"It is all over, dear. He has gone. But it was almost more than I could endure," she said, trembling and agitated.

"You met Mr. Eager?" Lady Althea asked, wonderingly. Then the truth dawned upon her, and she wondered she had not thought of that possibility before.

"Yes; not intentionally, though," Dorothy replied, with a quick glance at her friend's face. "Max regretted having come, so instead of coming to the house, he decided to walk in the woods until he could get a return train to London. You can guess the rest," she said, wearily.

"I understand, dear," Lady Althea said, her face very thoughtful and grave. "Fate delights in playing spiteful tricks sometimes. You go into the woods to avoid meeting Mr. Eager and he goes to the same place to avoid meeting you. My dear, you have been sorely tried this day," she added, tenderly. "You must go direct to your room and rest."

Dorothy allowed herself to be led unresistingly up the stairs and to her room, and submitted to be disrobed and put to bed like a tired child.

Meanwhile Lady Althea was seriously disturbed about her friend. She was too genuinely fond of Dorothy not to be anxious about her future. Being only human and a woman, she had all the feminine curiosity attributed to her sex. She knew Dorothy to be virtuous, pure-minded, and loyal; but so had been hundreds of other women who, when assailed by a fierce, wild temptation, had fallen from their high estate.

"If the farewell has been final, she may yet be saved. Perhaps she will tell me about their meeting," she thought to herself. "I hope she may. Brooding in silence over these things always makes them worse. What a woman can't talk of is bound to injure either her health or spirits. It worms its way into her heart, into the very core of her being, and eats away all that is truest and best and most lovable in her nature."

A dim light was burning in Dorothy's chamber, and the blinds were closely drawn. Dorothy lay motionless and still, and but for a smothered sob, now and then, Lady Althea would have thought her sleeping. She did not try to comfort her just yet; she knew that the tears would mercifully relieve the aching heart.

After a time the sobs grew less frequent, then ceased, Lady Althea went to her and knelt beside the bed.

"Can I do anything for you, dear?" she asked softly.

"Yes," the other replied, throwing her arms about her friend's neck. "Sit here by me while I tell you the whole miserable story. You are the only one I have left to love and care for now, and I want you to understand. But perhaps you don't care to hear it?"

"Yes, dear, I would. I might be able to advise, to help."

"There can be no help now. Our case is quite hopeless. Max leaves for America at once, and I am very glad of it. With a continent between us perhaps there may be safety. But he was so constant, so true, and his life has been ruined so utterly. You would pity him, Althea, did you see him."

"Poor fellow!" Lady Althea exclaimed, compassionately.

She was angry and annoyed with him, and yet she pitied him, for he had proved so faithful, never so much as bestowing a tender glance on another woman. His love was so desperate, so heartwhole, so hopeless.

"My dear Dorothy," she murmured. "Your marriage was a sad mistake, but unfortunately you are not the only woman who has committed such a fatal error. You will have to make the best of it, dear. Perhaps now that Mr. Eager has gone away, the pain may be less acute; at least you will not be under the necessity of meeting him constantly, for every meeting can only renew the pain."

"But life is hard, oh, so hard!" Dorothy answered bitterly.

"I know, dear, but would it be less hard had you thrown self-respect and honor to the winds? Believe me, dear, it would have been tenfold harder. Hard as duty sometimes is, the very effort of doing it gives us greater strength for future trials."

"I can think of nothing now but his unhappiness, his ruined life, and my own folly was the cause of it all. I did not know that I loved him so much till today. I know it is very wicked, very wrong, for me to speak like this, but I want you to know the truth, to understand. When he said good-by to me today, I felt like throwing my arms about his neck and bidding him take me with him. Honor, duty, self-respect seemed as nothing compared with his love. But when I tried to speak, my lips refused to form the words, and when speech had returned he was gone."

"Thank God he was!" exclaimed Lady Althea, fervently. "Oh, Dorothy, your good angel must have saved you today!"

"No, it was Max. He saw my weakness and saved me from myself," she answered softly.

"It was noble! It was grand!" Lady Althea cried, in ecstasy. "I always thought Mr. Eager selfish and thoughtless. I shall never think him so again."

"No, Max is the soul of honor, but intensely human. Even I did not dream of his depths of feeling till today."

"You have both been tried very severely, very cruelly, but you were brave and true, and the consciousness of having done right will be balm to your aching heart, and you, dear Dorothy, can still think of your little child without shame, without reproach, despite the fierce temptations and sorrows of life."

"Oh, why was little Dick not left to me? The sound of his voice, the clasp of his arms about my neck were stronger than all the bonds of honor, duty, respect. But he is gone, and I am so desolate, and life looks so terribly long; and little Dick and death so far away!"

The tears rushed to Lady Althea's eyes. "Oh, my dear! What can I say to comfort and cheer you? I know something of what you are suffering today, for I, too, have loved and lost."

"You, Althea?" Dorothy cried in surprise. "And you never told me," reproachfully.

"No, I seldom speak of it, and never think of it, if I can possibly avoid it. It was years ago, but the wound is not entirely healed yet, and your sorrow has opened it today. Sometime I may tell you about it. I pray, dear, that you will not let your trouble eat into your heart and destroy your whole life. I was once as hopeless, as despairing as you are tonight, but God pointed out the way of peace to me. I found balm for my wounded heart in ministering to the poor, the needy, in caring for the sick, and rescuing the little children from a life of degradation and shame. To you, too, dear, the way will be pointed out. You see, I have managed to live and to get considerable pleasure out of life. And despite the old sorrow that will come back sometimes, I hope, God willing, to live for many years to come."

"Your nature is noble and good," Dorothy answered. "I am wicked and rebellious, and I cannot accept my fate with patience. I have no heart, no desire to minister to the poor and needy."

"You may not be called upon to minister to the poor and needy. We are not all given the same work to do. Your work may be in a social way, or in ministering to your husband. But whatever it is, God will point out the way, and you will be given the strength and desire to perform it."

"The greatest kindness I can do my husband is to keep out of his way," Dorothy answered bitterly.

"You think so now, but the day will come when he will want you with him. Promise me, dear, that if that day comes, you will not shirk your duty. Remember, you are still his wife. It is a noble thing to be forgiven, but it is nobler to forgive."

Dorothy was very thoughtful for some seconds, then she said: "I promise, dear. If Sir Richard should ask me to go to him and forgive the past, I shall not refuse the request."

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

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* * *

Coining Words.

The esteemed Weather Bureau has sprung a new one. It is the word "smog," and it means smoke and fog. The bureau explains that very frequently there are times when this mixture is apparent in the atmosphere, and it considers the new word a great little idea.

Very well, "smog" let it be. But why end there? Let's call a mixture of snow and mud "smud"; a mixture of snow and soot "snoot," and a mixture of snow and hail "snail." Thus we might have a weather forecast:

"Snail today, turning to snoot tonight; tomorrow smoggy with smud."—Kokomo Times.

* * *

When Juries Mete.

Up in Alaska there used to be a district attorney who was long on native oratory, but short on education. Once, while prosecuting a big case, he came to the finish of his argument; and, according to Wilson Mizner, who was up there at the time, he leaned across the rail and made this plea:

"All I asts of you, gentlemen of the jury, is that you now retire and mete out jestice as she deserves to be met!"

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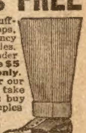

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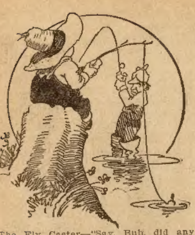


The Fly Caster—"Say, Bub, did any one ever catch anything in this stream?"

Boy on Stump—"Yep, mister, there's lots of water snakes ketches fellers around the legs if they walk around scaring the fish and plenty of other fellers catches malaria and colds doin' it, too."

Need Not Wait.

A young girl, fresh from the country, was employed by an English mistress as maid. They were about retiring for the night when she explained to Bridget:

"We generally have breakfast about eight o'clock."

Bridget, looking at mistress in an amusing way, with candlestick turned sideways in hand, grease dropping on the carpet, said:

"All right, if I'm not down, don't wait."

Trying It on the Dog.

An Irishman, having gone out in his nightgown a bitter cold night to stop the howling of a dog, was found by his wife almost paralyzed with cold, holding the struggling dog by the tail. "Howly murder, Pat," says she, "what would ye be afther doin'?"

"Tush," said Pat. "Don't ye see Oi'm tryin' to fraze the baste?"

Beasts.

A little girl, when asked by her teacher to distinguish between the human and the animal families, replied:

"A brute is an imperfect beast; man is a perfect beast."

BUTTING IN.

While walking down the street one day
  I heard a damsel squeal.
I tried to stop the runaway
  And spoiled a lengthy reel.

I saw a brutal fellow shove
  A child beneath a van.
I saved her, to the horror of
  The moving picture man.

At every turn you may invade
  The moving picture realm.
Let others ply the hero's trade;
  Don't butt into a film.

An Appropriate Motto.

Among the presents lately showered upon a dusky bride in a rural section of Virginia was one that was the gift of an old woman with whom both bride and groom were great favorites.

Some time ago, it appears, the old woman accumulated a supply of cardboard mottoes, which she worked and had framed as occasion arose.

So it happened that in a neat combination of blues and reds, suspended by a cord of orange, there hung over the table whereon the other presents were displayed for the delectation of the wedding guests this motto: "Fight on; fight ever."

After Them.

Augustus and Angelina were climbing the highest peak of the Alps, and she stood above him some twenty feet.

"What," he gasped—"what do you see?"

"Far, far below," she cried, "I see a long white streak, stretching like a paper ribbon back almost to our hotel."

"Ha, ha!" he ejaculated. "It's that hotel bill overtaking us."

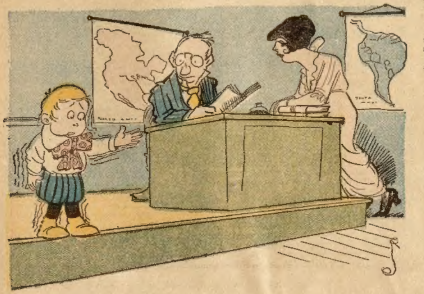
Her Kettle.

An angry mother had her little son by the hand and held a menacing cane.

"I'll teach you to tie a kettle to the cat's tail!" said the mother.

"It wasn't our cat," said the boy.

"No, it wasn't, but it was our kettle," said the mother.



Teacher—"How nicely Willie recites 'Woodman, Spare That Tree'!"
Superintendent—"Yes, he even shakes like a leaf."

Unable to Tell.

"See here, Rastus," said the new arrival at the hotel, "do you mean to tell me that this egg is fresh?"

"It was when hit was laid, suh," replied the waiter.

"And when was that, pray?" demanded the guest.

"Ah dunno, boss," replied Rastus. "Dis year is mah first season at dis yere hotel, suh, and therefoah Ah cain't tell."

In Mourning.

"What are you wearing that thing for?" asked Mrs. Gabb, when her husband came home with a band of crepe around his hat.

"For your first husband," replied Mr. Gabb. "I'm sorry he died."

Too Small for Him.

"What's the matter with this elevator?" asked the nervous man. "You keep trying to run it through the roof."

"You'll have to excuse me," replied the operator. "I'm not used to one of these little twenty-story buildings."

Appetites Differ.

Stout Lady (watching the lions being fed)—"'Pears to me, mister, that ain't a very big piece o' meat for sech a big animal."

"Attendant (with show of politeness)—"I s'pose it does seem like a little meat to you, ma'am, but it's enough for the lion."

Unfortunate.

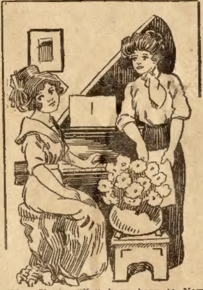
The New Yorker was descanting on the glories of Broadway.

"The streets are ablaze with light—a veritable riot," he said. "Why, there is one electric sign with one hundred thousand lights."

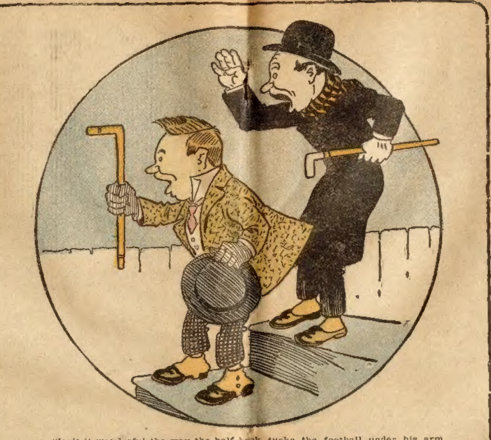
"Doesn't it make it rather conspicuous?" asked his English friend.

Eye-Openers.

"In choosing his men," said the Sabbath school superintendent, "Gideon did not select those who laid aside their arms and threw themselves down to drink; he took those who watched with one eye and drank with the other."



Mrs. Hoyle—"You have been to New York, I hear."
Mrs. Doyle—"Yes."
Mrs. Hoyle—"And how did you like the metropolis?"
Mrs. Doyle—"Oh, that was so far out that we didn't get a chance to see it."



"Isn't it wonderful the way the half-back tucks the football under his arm and runs with it?"
"Yes; I understand that he trained all summer with a colored gentleman, getting the knack of lifting a watermelon and escaping from the patch before the bulldog could catch him."

The End of Endurance.

It was evening. He and she were seated in her father's room burning her father's gas.

"Answer me, Angelina!" he cried, in a voice full of passionate earnestness. "Answer me! I can bear this suspense no longer."

"Answer him, Angelina!" came a voice through the keyhole. "Answer him! I can bear this expense no longer."

Asking Too Much.

"See here, waiter," exclaimed the indignant customer, "here's a piece of wood in my sausage!"

"Yes, sir," replied the waiter, "but I'm sure—er——"

"Sure nothing! I don't mind eating the dog, but I'm blowed if I'm going to eat the kennel, too."

Going One Better.

"This paper," said Languid Lewis, "tells about a horse runnin' away with a woman, and she was laid up six weeks."

"That ain't so worse," rejoined Boastful Benjamin. "A friend of mine once ran away with a horse, and he was laid up for six years."

His Idea of Columbus.

"Johnny," the teacher asked, "can you tell me anything about Christopher Columbus?"

"He discovered America."

"Yes. What else did he do?"

"I s'pose he went home and lectured about it."

A Helpmate.

Wife—"I have made two hundred dollars this afternoon."

Her Husband—"Phew!"

"You paid only three hundred for that old piano, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I sold it for five hundred."

"My! my! my! What are you going to do with the money?"

"There isn't any money."

"Eh?"

"I sold it to a dealer. He gives me a new piano for a thousand and allows me five hundred dollars for the old one. If you'd stay at home, and let me go to your of[illegible] and attend to your business, you'd soon be rich. Just think! Two hundred dollars a day is seventy-three thousand a year."

The Church Organ.

Edith had been to church for the first time.

"And what did you think of it?" asked her mother.

"I didn't like the organ very well."

"Why not?"

"Cause there wasn't any monkey with it."

Quite.

"Was your husband cool when you told him there was a burglar in the house?" asked Mrs. Hammer.

"Cool," replied Mrs. Gabb, "I should say he was cool. Why, his teeth chattered."

Poor Old Man!

"A couple," said Mrs. Simpkins, "got married a few days ago after a courtship which had lasted fifty years."

"I suppose," replied Mr. Simpkins, "the poor old man had become too feeble to hold out any longer."

Absence.

Madge—"Have you really found that absence makes the heart grow fonder?"

Marjorie—"Indeed I have! Since Charlie went away, I've learned to love Jack ever so much more."

All in Time.

Victim—"Mercy! That isn't the right tooth you've pulled."

Dentist—"Be patient, madam; I'm coming to it."

A FAIR ATHLETE.

She could swing a six-pound dumb-bell,
  She could fence and she could box;
She could row upon the river,
  She could clamber 'mong the rocks;
She could golf from morn till evening
  And play tennis all day long;
But she couldn't help her mother
  'Cause she wasn't very strong!

A National Calamity.

"Where's my umbrella?" demanded the wife of a member of Parliament.

"I'm afraid I've forgotten it, my dear," meekly answered her husband. "It must be in the train."

"In the train?" snorted the lady. "And to think that the affairs of the nation are intrusted to a man who doesn't know enough to take care of a woman's umbrella!"

Fair Words or Nothing.

"George," said the wife to her generally unappreciative husband, "how do you like my new hat?"

"Well, my dear," said George, with great candor, "to tell you the truth——"

"Stop right there, George! If you're going to talk that way about it I don't want to know."

A Safe Background.

A man rather untidy in his personal habits was discussing the question of a new waistcoat with a friend.

"What color would you advise?" he asked the friend.

"Why, said the friend, "I'd get one of soup color!"

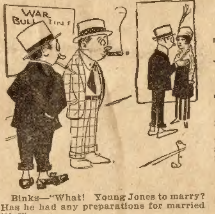
Inclusive.

The following announcement concluded an account of a wedding in a small Massachusetts town:

"The bridegroom's gift to the bride was a handsome diamond brooch, besides many other beautiful things in cut-glass."

The Inquisition.

Miss Maguire—"Any letter for me?"
Postmaster—"What name, please?"
Miss Maguire—"Must I tell?"
Postmaster—"Certainly."
Miss Maguire—"Well, if I must, Tom Dolan.'"



Binks—"What! Young Jones to marry? Has he had any preparations for married life?"

Winks—"Only one! He's the most finished liar I ever saw!"

Other Side of the Proposition.

"A man ought to kiss his wife every day."

"Yes," replied Mr. Meekton, "but suppose she's busy writing speeches and doesn't want to be disturbed?"

Not the Only One.

Pat was servant of a farmer and in his charge was a donkey, which was kept to amuse his employer's children. The donkey was following the farmer's wife round the yard one day, and the farmer, turning to Pat, said:

"I think that donkey is taking a liking to my wife."

"Och," said Pat, "shure and it's not the first donkey that's took a liking to her, sir."

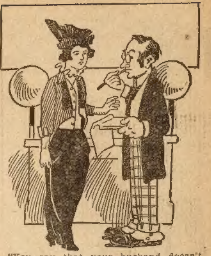
Kind-Hearted.

"And so," said the man who lives in a flat to his friend who is a commuter, "your next door neighbor, you say, is a real philanthropist."

"You bet he is," said the commuter, with enthusiasm; "why, he bought $10 worth of flower seed for my chickens last spring."

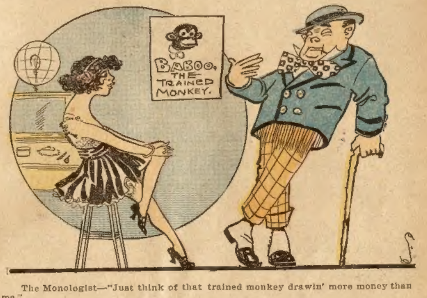
The Waist.

An imag'nary line is the waist,
Which seldom stays long where it's
    placed,
  But ambles and skips
  'Twixt the shoulders and hips—
According to popular taste.



"You say that your husband doesn't buy you any clothes?"

"No, if my tongue were coated it would have to be at my own expense."


BABOO, THE TRAINED MONKEY.

The Monologist—"Just think of that trained monkey drawin' more money than me."
The Rough Soubrette—"Never mind. You'll do better after you're trained."

Creating Interest.

"I understand that you favor local option."

"Yes," replied Colonel Stilwell.

"But you are not a total abstainer yourself?"

"No. But my doctor has limited me to a very small allowance, and I like to add as much as possible to the excitement of getting a drink."

His Reason.

"So," said the visitor, "you intend to become a physician when you grow up."

"Yes, sir," said the youth.

"And why have you decided upon the medical profession?"

"Well, a doctor seems to be the only man that keeps on getting paid whether his work is satisfactory or not."

That Settled It.

"Willie," said the teacher, "give me three proofs that the world is actually round."

"Yes'm," said Willie cheerfully; "the book says so, you say so, and ma says so."

Hard to Answer.

It had been a "habit" with Algy, who was now a senior, to approach the pater for extra money.

"My father never gave me half as much as I allow you," said the much imposed upon parent, angrily, one morning when his son's demands had been particularly excessive.

"Were you satisfied?"

"Certainly I was."

"Then why should he?"

In Motor Circles.

"I'm not at home to that gentleman, Jane," declared the belle.

"You haven't seen his card yet," protested her mother. "You don't know who it is."

"True, but it isn't the machine I am waiting for. I can tell by the honk."

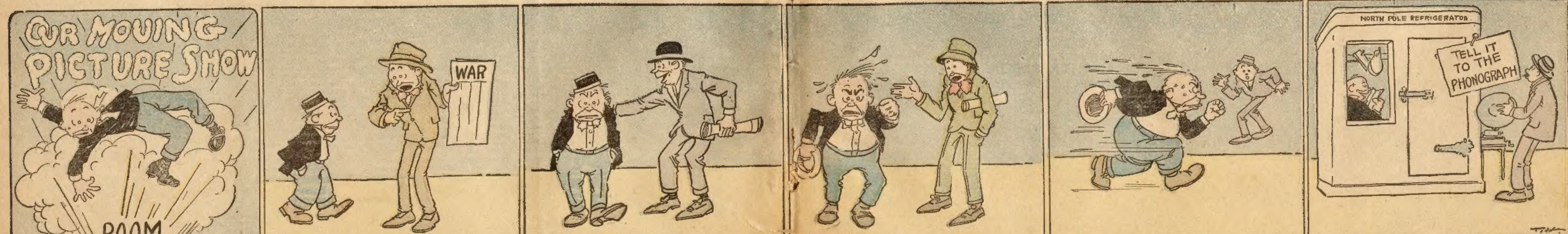
Unusual.

"There's something unusual about that girl."

"What's that?"

"Even his mother thinks she will make a good wife for him."

HE FOUND PEACE



The Major—"Darnation! Will I ever get away from this war argument? It nearly drives me crazy!

"No! Ding it! I don't know anything about the gosh hanged old war! Let me alone!

"Again! Can't a fellow have a minute's peace anywhere in this fool country?

"I'll get somewhere out of reach of these chattering parrots! All they seem to be able to talk about is war.

"Ha! ha! Locked on the inside safe and cool! Now talk your heads off and see if I care! That phonograph was one grand idea."

Detective Keeneyes' Craft

Or, THE DELEMERE MYSTERY

By J. Breckenridge Ellis

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CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOWARD WHITTLEBY did not for one moment believe the detective right in his assumption that it was not Alice Delemere who had been kidnaped. He felt that even to imagine such a mistake on the part of the abductors was like doubting his own word; and in this, at least, Jensen agreed with him.

However, both had decided that the detective must be allowed to have his own way in his course of investigation, and despite their convictions, they yielded to his whims.

It was concluded that, in order to avoid suspicion of the town, it would be best for Keeneyes to be seen as little as possible in the streets; best if he were not seen again, either as man or woman. Accordingly they decided that the barber should be brought to Jensen's cottage.

"I will tell him," said Jensen, "that I have a friend visiting me who is unable to come down town. I will not explain that it is because you are a detective that you are unable to show yourself; I will merely say you can't come, that circumstances forbid; and I will ask him to come here to shave you. You will be willing to limp or hobble about the room, won't you, so he'll think everything is all right?"

"My dear sir, I'll limp to a marvel."

"And you'll be needing a shave, won't you?"

"Unluckily I shaved as closely as possible on the train yesterday evening while in my drawingroom compartment, in order to be as smooth-faced a lady as possible; but I hope by night to grow him some whiskers. We must wait for night, therefore."

That night, accordingly, Keeneyes was limping about in an upstairs room of the miller's cottage, when Jensen came in, conducting the barber. Howard had been afraid to come with them, lest the barber suspect something afoot connected with the town's mystery, so he was hiding in the mill, intending at a later hour to cross the footbridge to the cottage.

Abe Deadening was duly introduced to Mr. Zellers, and when Keeneyes had limped about sufficiently in finding a suitable chair, the shaving mug was produced, hot water was provided, and Abe, stropping his razor in a pleasant humor—for the special visit meant special pay—began a stream of conversation, at first directed principally toward Jensen, who sat by the window in his shirt sleeves, but which presently concentrated against the detective's defenses.

"And so you're a friend of Jensen's," remarked Abe Deadening, restraining the impulse to flirt lather and hair upon the floor, as he always did in his barber shop, and condescending to use the leaf which Jensen had torn for him from a Congressional Record. "Ever been in Meadowville before?"

"Never have," Keeneyes mumbled, ejecting his words between swoops of the razor, "but I've heard of it—big mystery here, at one time—Delemere house blown up. By way, Jensen, ever find out 'bout it?"

"No," said the miller, "the whole thing's a mystery still."

"Whole family's since bobbed up, one time 'nother, eh?"

"All except Miss Alice," said Jensen. The barber was silent.

Keeneyes said no more until the shaving was finished; neither did the barber. His taciturnity, contrasted with his previous talkativeness, was striking. Keeneyes meant to sound this difference of mood; but he did not care to probe too deep while lying under the other's razor.

"All right," said Abe Deadening at last, preparing to put up his outfit.

Keeneyes rose cautiously from the chair and asked, "By the way, it seems to me that it was a man named Deadening—and, by the way, wasn't he a barber, too?—who saw the abduction of Miss Alice Delemere through a barn-chink?"

"I'm the man," Abe Deadening said, bending over his little valise.

"Is it possible!" Keeneyes was intensely interested. "Do sit down and tell me the particulars."

"I must get back ——"

"Nonsense; I'll pay for your time. You can't think how you interest me!"

"Yes, sit down, Abe," Jensen coaxed. "My friend is immensely interested in the Delemere affair. Tell him all you know about it."

"Well, sir, seeing as you're a stranger in these parts, it can't be to you what it is to the balance of us," demurred the barber, "and as what little I know is very unpleasant, and a strain on me to go over it, I am going to ask you to excuse me."

"But I can't excuse you," Keeneyes declared. "I want to write up the story for my paper back home, and from what I read at the time of the dynamiting, you are the man who saw the abduction. That's a very important part, and it will interest my folks like anything if I can give a write-up from the very man who saw the three rascals carrying off Miss Alice Delemere."

"Awfully sorry——" Deadening snapped to his valise and reached for his hat.

"Of course," said the detective, "if you refuse to tell the story, I'll write you up as the only man of Meadowville who wouldn't say anything about the mystery. I'll have your picture, too. Everybody will think you know more than you've told, and the detectives will come to interview you."

"Are you a-threatening me?" demanded the barber, fiercely.

"That's what I'd call it," said Keeneyes, but you may think it's nothing but badinage."

"I don't know your 'badinage,' but I do know——"

"Come, come, that's what I want to hear—all that you do know!"

"Abe," interposed Jensen, "you are making a wrong impression; you're not doing yourself justice. Can't you see that in refusing to speak, you are laying yourself open to all sorts of wild suspicions. Come, be sociable!"

The barber seated himself, evidently with extreme reluctance. "Well, mister, you didn't go at me the right way, and that 's a fact. So you want me to tell you how I watched that abduction from the crack in the barn wall? But if you've read it all, what's the use going over it again? It bothers my mind."

"I now offer my services in relieving your mind," replied the detective, genially. "You need do nothing but answer some questions, and by simply telling the truth, you'll not have to use your mind at all. I'll exert all the thought in forming my questions."

"If you mean to insinuate that I haven't told the truth all along——"

"Now, my dear fellow, you're using your mind, and see how hot and red you've become. No, no! you let that mind of yours rest and simply tell me what I ask to know. You saw three rascals abduct a young lady, there in the dark alley. The alley was not only dark, but there was a white cloth tied across the lady's face. Now, what made you think that it was Miss Alice Delemere?"

"How could I help thinking so? Hadn't Miss Alice disappeared?"

'Oh, I beg you not to begin questioning me! How do I know? As to that, all the Delemere family disappeared, and we know all of them were not kidnaped; or at least such is a very reasonable inference."

"But the young lady was carried out of the Delemere house."

"Therefore you conclude it had to be Miss Alice Delemere?"

"Certainly I concluded so; so did everybody else in Meadowville."

"I ought to have been here," Keeneyes sighed.

"What!" exclaimed the barber. "Can you suppose that after I saw her brought from that very house, it was not Miss Alice? Don't you know she didn't come down to breakfast the next morning? Where was she, unless carried off? And who was carried off unless it was Miss Alice?—from that very house!"

"There you go, questioning me again! Well, in the morning, when you heard of the dynamiting, you concluded that it must have been Miss Alice you saw, and reflecting that you might have intervened to save her, and didn't, made you lose your mind for a time—eh?"

"Yes, that's just what it did. It unhinged my mind."

"And it was Dr. Smerll that brought you back to reason, wasn't it?"

"He was the man—talked to me soft and suggestive, and made me see that what was past was past."

"While he was about it," said Keeneyes, dryly, "he should have reminded you that what was future, was future. No, don't interrupt. You've got nothing to conceal, therefore you can't object to harmless questions. So you consider Dr. Smerll an expert in nervous affections, do you? Will you kindly tell me just what he said to you to make you feel yourself again?"

"Oh, it was just soothing words."

"Just so. Will you repeat some of those soothing words?"

"How can I remember?"

"How can you forget?"

The barber blinked his eyes and moved uneasily in his chair.

"He talked to you about the abduction, didn't he?"

"He may of."

"And about Miss Alice Delemere?"

"He may of."

"He showed you that what you had thought you saw was a delusion, didn't he? That the intentions you imagined were only in your imagination?"

"What intentions? And what did I see?"

"You saw something to make you insane, or to pretend to be insane—and it wasn't that abduction in the alley, of course. Such a sight as that wouldn't turn a man crazy—not if the man were you. What was it you saw, Deadening, that drove you out of your head? And how did Mr. Smerll explain it so as to make you think you had been mistaken?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," cried the barber, starting up and putting on his hat. "You can write anything about me you please. I must go back to the shop. Good evening!"

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When he was gone, Keeneyes sighed. "Well, we must interview Dr. Smerll; it's a nuisance, since Deadening could have told us everything—we'll waste a little time. However, I believe we'll be going to the fountain-head."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHEN Howard had seen the barber safely out of sight, he crossed to the miller's cottage to learn if anything had been imparted by the visitor. The miller told him that nothing new had developed, but the detective exclaimed:

"On the contrary I have learned something vital to our case, and that is, that Dr. Smerll must be thoroughly sifted, for I am convinced he knows more about the mystery than he has ever divulged. But before I ask you a few questions about him, I want both of you to think as hard as it is possible for you to think (and I do not mean to say that you are without mentality, by no means). I want you to think upon this point: Did anybody, to your recollection, disappear from the town of Meadowville at the same time that the Delemeres disappeared?"

After a pause, out of compliment to the other's request both shook their heads.

"If not precisely on the day, possibly on the day before, or the day following?" Keeneyes insinuated.

Again they shook their heads, and Jensen volunteered, "Mr. Zellers—or Mr Keeneyes—nobody ever disappeared in these parts at any time, except that family of four."

"Oh, my dear sir, I was using the word 'disappeared' in an accommodated sense adapting it to your comprehension. I simply meant went away, went out of sight and out of mind."

"As to that, of course people are always going away, for a day or so."

"Yes, yes, but they come back I mean a departure without a return Now divest your minds of the idea that the Delemeres miraculously disappeared. Let us say they went away; they departed and have not ostensibly come back. Very good—if I may say so, excellent! Now at the time they went away, did anybody else go away from your interesting little village?"

"Do you mean to be blown up?" queried Jensen, cautiously.

"My dear fellow!" ejaculated the detective, irritably, "what are you talking about? Listen—put your mind on my words: Did nobody at that time go away besides the Delemeres, somebody who has not come home yet?"

"As far as that is concerned," said Howard, "if you are talking about normal departures, just well-understood and everyday happenings——"

"That is precisely what I am talking about."

"Well, if that's what you're determined to have, you might say that Miss Denvers went away about the same time the Delemeres disappeared."

"Yes," objected Jensen, "but everybody knew about her, and nobody knows about the Delemeres."

"No matter—tell me about this Miss Denvers."

"There's nothing strange to tell, except it's unusual, of course, for anybody to go from here to Naples. That's all there is about that."

"This Miss Denvers went to Italy, you say? And about the time the Delemeres went? Why, this is fine; I was looking for a young lady and possibly you have supplied her. With whom did she go?"

"She was to join a party in New York and go straight on without even a day in New York. That was the program. Well, she left here the day before the Delemere house was blown up—so you see she couldn't have been in it."

"Did she travel alone to New York City?"

"Yes, the party was there waiting for her to join them."

"Did she ever write back home?"

"Didn't have time—went right on board and across the sea to Italy. It was a slow ship, and the family doesn't expect her to be writing letters."

"They just take for granted she made it all right, eh?"

"Of course. She hadn't decided to go till the last minute and there were so many things to do at once—and over there they'll be so rushed, touring everywhere, never stopping—she may not write for a week or two yet; I mean—of course, she's written cards, and the like, but they haven't had time to come to America."

"Was this Miss Denvers a young lady?"

"Yes, she was about two years older than Edgar Delemere. He was desperately in love with her, but of course she looked on him merely as a boy."

"Oh! Is she the young lady who gave him the watch fob which was found embedded in the branch of a tree? How extremely interesting! You say she had no romantic interest in Edgar? But possibly she had another attachment?"

"Dr. Smerll——"

"Aha! Do go on! You are overwhelming me with clews."

Jensen blinked his eyes. "If I've given you a clew it's more than I've kept for myself. I was only saying that Dr. Smerll was devoted to Miss Denvers, but it never seemed to me that she cared for him. Some of the neighbors said she did, and some said she didn't. To me, she didn't look it."

"You've seen them together?"

"Yes, out driving. But if she cared for him, she didn't look it."

The detective turned to Howard: "What is your opinion, Howard?"

Howard reflected, then said, "She didn't look it. I think Jensen's right."

"And do you think Dr. Smerll liked her?"

"Oh, yes, everybody knew that. He was fairly desperate about her."

"Didn't it hurt him for her to go to Italy?"

Both men considered this question too silly to deserve attention Suppose it had hurt him, would Miss Denvers have cared? Or could he have helped himself?

"What kind of man is this Dr. Smerll?" asked Keeneyes

"About thirty—handsome—very skillful physician—intelligent—something of a student—a good mixer——"

"Does he drink?" snapped Keeneyes.

"What do you call drinking?" asked Jensen, cautiously.

"The same thing you do."

"Well, yes, he does. And sometimes pretty heavy. Sometimes too heavy."

Keeneyes rubbed his hands. "This is better and better. Come—how heavy? Is he ever intoxicated?'

"To that degree," answered Jensen, "that sometimes he goes to a private room he has hired by the year at the hotel, and in that room he may stay a solid week, till he has ended his spree But it happens only two or three times a year."

"This is a sporty character to be making eyes at our Miss Denvers!" exclaimed the detective, disapprovingly. "When was his last spree?"

"Oh, I don't know—I don't keep track of Dr. Smerll. If I don't happen to meet him on the street, I might go a year without knowing he was in existence."

"But he'd be in existence whether you knew it or not, wouldn't he?"

Jensen became obstinate. "I don't know whether he would or not. If you are getting funny at my expense——"

"Good heavens, Jensen! If I were, I'd never send in a bill. I am perfectly serious, however. What I mean to find out is this: He might have had a spree at the time of the disappearance for all you know. Is that a fact?"

"I guess he could."

Keeneyes turned to Howard: "Do you know nothing about it?"

"Sometimes I think I do till you begin asking questions," Howard admitted ruefully, "but it gets knocked out of me. I was going to say that I have an impression Dr. Smerll was off his legs at the explosion time."

"What gives you this impression?"

"I don't remember. I can't say. All the same, I've got it."

"Then you take care of it, for I hope you're right. That impression may be worth money to us. Do you think it will be difficult for me to interview Dr. Smerll?"

"He's a very approachable man," Jensen declared. "But if you ask him about his sprees, I don't want to be there."

"Not be there? Why, I'm counting on

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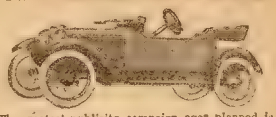

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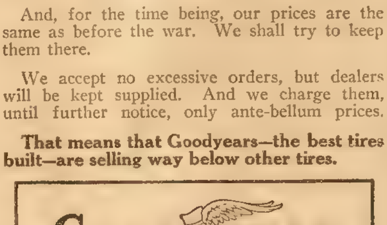

you or Howard to take me to him immediately."

"What, now? But it is too late."

"And what is a doctor for if he may not be roused at any hour?"

"Yes, for a patient, but you——"

"I'll be a patient. Have you forgotten my limp?"

"He'll see through that at once. He's a very smart doctor, Smerll is."

"And I'm a very smart—but it doesn't become me to finish that. I mean to say I'm a detective; and I hope to see through him before he sees through me."

"I'll take you there," Howard volunteered, "if you are going to act in such a way as not to excite him. If you talk about his sprees, he's likely to knock you down, and maybe me, too, for bringing you. It would be a pure insult."

"You needen't go along, then," said Keeneyes, grimly.

"I'll introduce you," Jensen grudgingly agreed, "if you'll promise not to refer to Miss Denvers. You're frank, Mr. Zellers, you're awfully frank. And nobody can mention Miss Denvers to Dr. Smerll. He'd consider it none of your business and I must say he'd be right. He might knock you down——"

"One would think," the detective complained, "that I am investigating your mystery case for my own personal satisfaction in violent opposition to every hindrance you can throw in my way! Well, stay away, then, since you disapprove of my policy; you would only be in the way."

He stood up.

"Now, minutely describe for me Dr. Smerll's house, so I can find it, and Dr. Smerll, so I can find him in it—I'll do the rest."

Fifteen minutes later, Keeneyes was ringing at Dr. Smerll's door.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

KEENEYES did not have long to wait before the door of Dr. Smerll's house was opened by the physician himself. The young physician occupied a cottage on the public square, and his office was on the ground floor. He was provided for by a housekeeper and her husband, who kept the place in order; he lived otherwise alone. Thanks to his habit of late reading, he had not gone to bed.

"Dr. Smerll?" asked the detective. "My name is Zellers, at your service. I am afraid I have disturbed you, and I fear I must disturb you still more. May I hold a few minutes' quiet conversation with you?"

Smerll begrudged the time thus taken from his book. "You are ill?" he asked tentatively.

"I can limp," said the other, doing so, "but I must confess, the object of this call——"

"It is very late, Mr. Zellers, and——"

"Yes, but presently it will be too late; that's why I am here now."

"I can give you a few minutes," said the physician, coldly, leading the way into his office, just across the hall. He turned on the light, and they sat down, the host with the air of one who expects any moment to rise and depart.

"You cannot guess why I am here, Dr. Smerll?"

"I must confess I am without the slightest inkling to the reason."

"It must be sometimes the case, Doctor, that in your lucid hours you are brought face to face with people or circumstances that you cannot adjust to your lucidity; is it not so?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Smerll, frigidly. "Explain yourself instantly, or——"

"Spare yourself the trouble of stating your alternative, since I wish nothing better than to come instantly to the explanation. I hoped, however, you would grasp my meaning without the baldness of undressed words. I meant to say that sometimes when sober, you must be perplexed by people or incidents with whom or with which you may have been more or less involved while you were drunk."

Dr. Smerll sprang to his feet with a furious ejaculation, and started toward the other menacingly.

"You see," Keeneyes stepped swiftly behind his chair, "you cannot stand a blunt explanation. Few men can. Yet you called for it."

"You impudent scoundrel——"

"Wait one moment. If you do not hear me, you'll close your ears to important truths concerning Miss Denvers——"

The physician halted, glaring at him in speechless rage.

"I know so much more than you do about the mystery," Keeneyes persisted, "that you will be doing yourself a great injustice if you do not preserve your self-control. You might knock me down, but what would that prove? There is absolutely nothing in that. Sit we down, again; I am not here for child's play. Look—" he drew aside the lapel of his coat—"I am a regular detective; my business is not fighting."

"And why do you, a regular detective, come here to insult me?"

"If to tell you the truth is to insult you, what a weak character you must be! Doesn't everybody in Meadowville

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know about your periodic sprees? Then why is it a crime to mention them? No, no; the real harm is in your getting drunk, but that is beside the question. I have not come here to try to reform you; all the same, I don't want to get myself hurt."

"But that is what is going to happen to you if you don't explain immediately the object of your outrageous and ungentlemanly conduct."

"I am not at present either a gentleman, a man, or a human being; I am an impersonal agent of investigation—a soulless detective. Since you request it so forcibly, I will explain, and immediately: I have come here to find out what you know and I don't; and in order to place the matter on a footing of agreeable interest, I am prepared to tell you what I know and you don't. Shall we proceed, or must I seek my information elsewhere?"

"Sir, had you approached me in the spirit of a gentleman——"

"Dr. Smerll, I approached you in the way to make you show your rough side. You cannot tell just what a man is under the ordinary insipid, lukewarm environments of his life. All men are more or less alike when in an easy temper, well-fed, well-sleeked. To get at individualities, you must stir up the human. That is why I stirred you up, to get at your individuality. We might sit here saying polite nothings to each other till Judgment Day, and it would prove nothing. But when I tell you you get drunk, it probes beneath the surface. When I ask you about Miss Denvers, you wince."

"And you will wince if you do not leave my house at once!" interposed the physician, in a passion.

"Very well. Good-by. I go to tell Miss Denvers' parents that she did not go to Europe, as they fondly imagine."

"Wait! What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that Miss Denvers deceived her parents; she did not go abroad. And it was on your account that she was guilty of this duplicity."

"How on my account? What on earth have I to do with the matter?"

"Tush! Do you think I don't know? Good evening."

"No, but wait—I have been too hasty. And, after all, you are a regular detective; perhaps you can help me unravel——"

"Now you talk sense, and it sounds much more appropriate, coming from a man like you, when sober. Leave your foolish questions for your spreeing times. Miss Denvers stayed at home when her parents thought she had rushed to New York to join the touring party that were to sail at once. She left Meadowville, it is true, but returned secretly, because she had agreed to elope with you, to become your wife. You had all prepared; were to drive her posthaste to the minister's at a distant town, having first secured your license—but the plan was nipped in the bud."

Dr. Smerll smiled sarcastically. "You no doubt have an ingenious theory to explain why your ingenious plan was nipped in the bud?"

"My dear sir, it was your plan of elopement—why do you call it mine?"

"I deny any such nonsensical plan as having emanated from me."

"Dr. Smerll, did Miss Denvers really sail for Italy?"

"Her parents are the proper ones to answer such questions. Why do you come to me in regard to the matter?"

"Because the parents don't know, and you do. Fortunately, I know, also. She did not go abroad. She returned to this town in secret, as I said, and expected to elope with you. But your scheme was nipped in the bud."

"Who nipped it in the bud, pray?"

"Miss Denvers nipped it."

"Maybe you can tell me why?"

"Maybe I can. She cared more for her parents than she had imagined, and less for you. Her conscience rose against her infatuation. She meditated, remembered your past history, dreaded your spells of drunkenness, said to herself that the hope of saving you was too faint, the certainty of wretchedness overwhelming. In a word, she changed her mind. She refused to go with you."

The physician was again on his feet, now with an ugly scowl. "Refused?" he repeated with a sneer. "Oh, how wise you are! Has she told you that?"

"I do not mean she refused by word of mouth. She simply eluded you."

"Liar! Villain! Go—I am done with you. I don't care what you invent—spread it about as much as you please—prove what you can——"

"Oh, very good! Abe Deadening is my witness. I'll prove it by him."

The physician reeled against the wall, muttering, "Abe Deadening?"

"Yes, yes, the barber whose mind you so adroitly cured. But you order me to go—very good."

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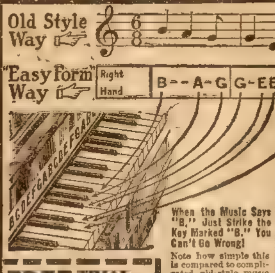

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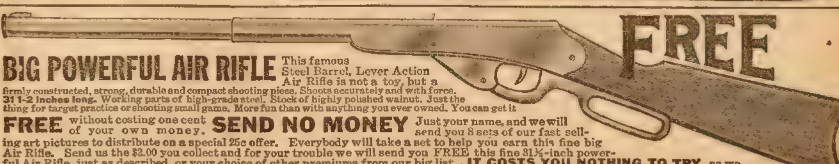

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Cold cash often melts marble hearts.

Many are called, but more are bluffed.

The path of By-and-By leads to Nowhere.

The end of a busy little bee is more or less painful.

Most of a man's illusions disappear with his hair

Many a soldier's first engagement has ended in a wedding.

The deeper a man is in debt the less he cares for expenses.

Folly is a man's worst enemy and discretion his best friend.

Men laugh at feminine folly, but it fools them just the same.

A man who never argues with a woman has the germs of wisdom.

Blessed is the peacemaker, especially if he keeps at a safe distance.

As a man grows older his bump of conceit gradually becomes a dent.

Some men are born with black eyes and others have to fight for them.

Money talks, but it never gets a chance to say much at bargain sales.

There may be nothing new under the sun, but there are a lot of fresh people.

Though truth may lie at the bottom of a well very few anglers go there to fish.

Automobiles are a good deal like men. The less character they have the more noise they make

A street car runs twice as fast when you are trying to catch it as it does after you have caught it.

Few families who have domestic skeletons in their closets have sense enough to keep them there.

If the average man could only sell the advice he gives away it would keep him busy counting his coin.

Many a woman who wants her husband to be honest is sorry that his honesty keeps him so poor.

The old toper doesn't mind being treated for the liquor habit by men who say: "Have one with me."

Just a little philosophy may enable one to take things as they come, but to part with them as they go—that is different.

This would be a grand old world if people could purchase experience on trial, with the privilege of returning it if not satisfactory.

A woman says that the longer a man studies the curves of a decanter the closer he is apt to imitate them on his homeward journey in the early morn.

(Continued from page fifteen.)

"I am too hasty. Good heavens, Mr. Zellers, can't you make allowances for a man half-distracted? No, no! Sit down! Tell me everything you know, and then I will do as you wish."

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

The Purple Princess.

(Continued from page three.)

up from the water and fanned the cheeks of the imperial lover.

"Yonder is his house," said the Duke, in a whisper. "You will observe a light in the second window. There, no doubt, you will find Marc of Coblenz."

"You can go back, Duke. I will not lose my way when I return."

In another moment the Emperor was alone. After a brief survey of the house before him he moved forward and soon reached the main entrance.

"This is luck indeed," he said to himself. "To find the bird so easily is fortunate. Now, my Princess, we will see who wins the toss for a heart."

To get into the house was no trick at all, for the door was not fastened, and presently Francis found himself beyond it. A light swung in the hall that received him, and threw its shadow at his feet.

"The old man has lost his sword tricks, the Duke said," the Emperor went on. "I have no one to harry me but the young lout. Aha! here is the staircase," and he began stealthily to ascend the steps that rose before him.

Gliding down a shadowy corridor he reached a door from beneath which filtered a few rays of soft light. The Emperor did not knock, but grasped the brazen knob and pushed the portal inward. As the door swung open a young man rose to his feet and stared at his caller. Francis beat down the burning desire to leap forward with drawn blade, and looked at Marc of Coblenz.

"You will pardon me," said the Emperor, as coolly as he could, "but my business admits of no ceremony."

Eudora's lover was staring still, but recovering suddenly, he pushed a chair forward while he remained on his feet.

"You are Marc of Coblenz?" said Francis, to make sure of his man beyond all mistakes.

"Men call me such, and I care not to dispute the title."

There was a lordliness in Marc's tones that went like a shaft of ice to the other's heart

The Emperor looked around the room and saw no weapon within reach of the youth's hand. The discovery sent a thrill through every nerve.

"I have war with you, Marc of Coblenz," suddenly blurted the passion-goaded ruler. "This world, big as it is, is too small for both of us. There must be another grave before our strife is over."

"What mean you?" cried the young man. "I have no quarrel with you."

"You would pluck the golden grapes in my vineyard," was the flashed reply. "You have come between me and the prize I seek. Where is your weapon?"

The Emperor's sword was out now and the light of the room was dancing along the steel. Francis lunged forward, and ere Marc could lift a hand he felt the point of the rapier at his breast. It had the sharp pricking of a needle.

"You speak in riddles," Marc said, recoiling a step. "What has made this world too small for us?"

"Love!" hissed the Emperor. "Love, the goal of man's desire. Guard or die!"

There was no mistaking the meaning of these words. Marc saw death in the visage before him. He was dealing with one bereft of sanity, with a man who had come to slay.

"To the shades of Tartarus!" grated the Emperor. "I take the woman you have won with your soft words, and she shall sing for me alone."

What could Marc do? Once more the steel touched his bosom, and behind it were the orbs of a human tiger.

All at once, in the desperateness of the moment, young Marc of Coblenz seized the blade, which cut his hand, and, summoning all his powers, wrenched it from the Emperor's clutch.

"Two can play at the game of love and war," cried he, forcing his startled adversary across the room. "If love is the stake let us see who holds the final trumps."

At the same time he called "Hafford! Hafford!" struggling the while with the man in his clutches, and the door flew open to admit his one retainer.

Old Hafford's eyes were distended and his face was white.

"Finish the lout, Hafford!" cried Marc, rousing the aged lion. "You are no weakling, if you have reached threescore," and Francis, panting in his fury, was flung at the old guardian.

Hafford's long fingers closed at his throat.

"What shall I do with him, master?"

"Fling him to the bottom of the stair, and let the wolf creep back to his lair if he survive!"

Francis was dragged unceremoniously from the chamber; old Hafford had no mercy. Presently Marc was confronted by the old man, whose face was ashen.

"My God, master!" he cried, as he sank into a chair. "I flung him downward with all my might. He lies below like one dead. God save us now, for it was the Emperor!"

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

Not Introduced.

At a country picnic a good-natured chap spoke rashly to a young lady without the formality of an introduction. There was occasion for it, for he happened to see a great, fat caterpillar crawling on her lace collar, and, jumping toward her, he said, "Madam, permit me to——"

But the young lady waved him off with an imperious gesture and said: "How dare you speak to me without an introduction? You are certainly no gentleman, sir!"

Here the caterpillar overbalanced itself and fell down her neck. "Ouch! Oh! Help! Take it off, somebody!" screamed the fair one.

The man was the only somebody around just then, and he said: "Couldn't think of it, madam. I haven't been introduced to the caterpillar."

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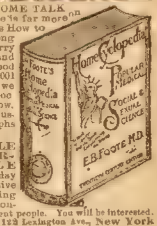
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The Young Guardsman

Or, Jack Winslow at Waterloo

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 35, August 29. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK'S HAZARDOUS SERVICE.

OUR gallant young Guardsmen, after their encounter with the cuirassiers, reached Hougomont without further adventures. Their escape from the French had indeed been a lucky one, and now they were ready for the battle whenever it began.

Neville's wound proved a much slighter one than he feared. Several stitches and a bandage rendered him almost as good as ever, and when the hurt had been dressed he declared that he could hardly wait till the fray opened.

"You are constantly getting into hot water," remarked Old Moustache to Jack, whom he encountered shortly after the return. "One of these days you won't get off so well."

"I'm willing to take my chances," was the reply. "I didn't come out here with Uncle Cecil to lead a life of inactivity. Adventures are what keep a fellow awake, and then it adds to the circulation of the blood."

"It's all well enough about the blood if you keep it in your veins," grinned the old veteran. "But the trouble is an enemy's bullet is apt to let some of it out."

It was evident from the state of affairs at Hougomont that Wellington was preparing for a desperate battle there. All felt that Bonaparte would hurl his columns against the chateau which was defended by a few thousand men, not enough, as many feared, to hold the important post.

Jack went at once to his quarters for a little rest. As he was in the act of reposing he caught sight of a man who sauntered half-aimlessly past him. The fellow was clad in the rather gaudy uniform of a fusilier, and but for a glimpse of his face Jack would have thought nothing of him. His eyes looked familiar.

"That man looks like Max Moritz, the spy whom we saw in Brussels," he said to himself. "I can never forget those baleful eyes. Is it possible that he is plying his old work right in our midst, and in the King's livery at that?"

In an instant all thought of rest vanished from his mind and he turned and followed quietly after the man.

"Jack?"

He turned at sound of his name and came face to face with his uncle, Colonel Willoughby.

"I have a bit of work for you," said the Colonel. "I want to send a message to the Duke, and I know of no better messenger than yourself."

Jack was flattered by the recognition. Of course he would have preferred to pay his respects just then to the man supposed to be Max Moritz, but the greater duty pleased him.

"I am at your service, Colonel," he answered, with a salute. "I shall be proud to bear your message to the Duke."

"Come with me, then."

Colonel Willoughby walked to his quarters, followed by the young hero, and began to write out the dispatch.

"There it is, sir," said he, when he finished, handing the writing to his nephew. "You will find the Duke somewhere along the Charleroi Road, just where I can't say. The way is well defined, but you must watch out, for you will have to skirt dangerous ground."

"I'll keep my eyes open."

A fresh horse was furnished, and having concealed the dispatch on his person, Jack mounted and gave a parting salute.

"This is better than having a lot of shooting cuirassiers at one's heels," he thought, as he rode through the orchard attached to the chateau. "Then, I will come under the notice of the great Wellington himself, something that never would have happened if I had remained in London."

All thoughts of Max Moritz had seemingly left him, but when he recurred to that individual he resolved to look him up when he got back to Hougomont.

For some while he rode through the ranks of the allied army, and at last found himself in the open country. Here and there the landscape was dotted with little plantations, and ripened fields of wheat caught his roving eye.

At one of the small farmhouses Jack saw a well, and beside it was a young girl drawing a bucket of water. The sight of the cooling fluid caused him to long for a drink, for the day was already hot, and he presently drew rein at the well. The girl, who was quite comely, started at sight of him and centered her gaze upon him.

"Would you mind giving me a drink?" asked Jack, leaning toward her.

"Not at all, sir," was the cheery reply, and forthwith she dipped a gourd into the bucket and handed it up to him.

As he raised it to his lips, Jack detected the rapid glance which she sent to the farmhouse but a few yards distant. He looked in that direction and saw a man step back from the open doorway as though he did not care to be seen.

"Do you live here?" inquired Jack, turning again to the girl.

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"I am Adele Lavare."

"French?"

"No, Belgian."

Jack did not like the manner of her speech. She seemed eager to get rid of him.

"Where is your father?" he continued.

"He is in Brussels, and there is no man in the house now."

That the last words were a falsehood Jack well knew, for he had seen the man who had just stepped out of sight.

"Very well," said he, dissembling. "I must ride on," and thanking the girl for the water, he gathered up the reins and bade her adieu.

"The girl lied," he ejaculated. "There was a man at the house, and she wanted to conceal it for some purpose."

Thereupon he loosened the pistol in the holster and looked carefully to the priming. Skirting the farmhouse on the left he saw that the road now led through a patch of timber which he could not avoid. The trees stood quite thick there, and despite the rising sun there was much gloom in the wood.

The importance of the dispatch he was carrying put him doubly on his guard. To be captured and robbed might overturn Wellington's plans and cause the defeat of the allied armies. The thought thrilled the young Guardsman.

He had been told that beyond the wood he would find open country, and believed that, once there, all danger would be passed. Eager to reach the spot, he touched his horse with the spurs and sent him forward in a smart gallop.

He was soon in the heart of the timber, when all at once a horseman seemed to rise from the ground, and a pistol was thrust into his face.

"Stand!" cried the gruff-looking man in the saddle. "Stand and hand over your dispatch!"

Jack felt his blood tingle every vein. What! give up the precious message to this man? He would sooner yield his life.

"Come, don't shirk the business," growled the fellow. "You're the pigeon I've been waiting to pluck. You're bound to the Iron Duke from Hougomont."

"What if I am?"

Jack was sparring for time.

"Aren't you going to give it up?" cried the man. "Do you want me to take it from a dead body?"

"Well, if I must, I must," said Jack. "I saw you at the farmhouse back yonder."

"I don't dispute that," laughed the other. "I stole a pretty march on you, my boy."

Watching the man from beneath his brows while he pretended to be getting at the message, Jack saw his eyes wander to the right. It was a fatal mistake. As quick as thought the young Guardsman's hand flew to the holster, and the next instant his pistol covered the other.

"Drop your weapon!" he commanded, in no unmistakable tones. "Throw it away, or there'll be a dead man on the ground."

The fellow snarled.

"Hurry up!" continued Jack, looking coolly over the cocked pistol. "I learned to shoot in London."

With an oath the man complied, and his weapon was hurled to one side.

"Now, sir, turn your horse's head and ride in front of me," Jack demanded. "I'm not plucked yet, as you see."

"But——"

"No parleying, I am under orders," was the stern interruption. "I'll shoot to kill if you utter another word."

With the look of a hyena, the baffled rascal got into the road before Jack.

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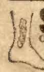

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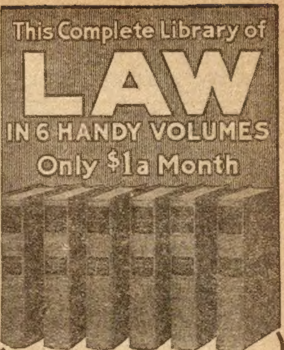

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who kept his weapon leveled at his head, and the journey was resumed.

"I'll pay you to let me off," came suddenly over the man's shoulder. "I've got money on my person——"

"If you had the army chest of the Great Napoleon I wouldn't let you off," was the rejoinder. "You're going with me to the Iron Duke."

The captured man shut his lips hard and scowled darkly. It was the last word he said, for not long afterward Jack rode with his prisoner to a group of officers on a ridge, and saw the Iron Duke looking through his field glass over the plain below.

"And pray whom have you with you?" asked Wellington, glancing at Jack's captive.

"A man who tried to rob me of my dispatch."

"Ahem! Here, Willis, we don't care for such prisoners. Take this man away. You know what to do with him." Then to Jack: "I like the stuff you're made of, young sir. You'll be a captain one of these days."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OPENS.

"YOU need not return immediately," continued the Iron Duke. "I think you need a little rest after your arduous ride. The battle will not open for a while yet."

Jack drew to one side and watched the group on the ridge. The officers were most interested in the splendid scene observable by the glasses. Suddenly one of them turned to our young Guardsman and handed him his field glass.

"Look yonder," said he. "It is a sight worth seeing."

Jack accepted and put the glass to his eyes. Far away he saw the mighty army to which the Duke was about to give battle. It was indeed a thrilling sight.

He distinctly saw the mail-clad cuirassiers with their glittering helmets and breastplates, lines of scarlet lancers, and hussars with bearskin caps and jackets rich with gold lace. As far as eye could reach nothing was to be seen but cuirasses, helmets, busbies, sabers, lances, and glittering lines of bayonets.

"It is grand," said the boy, handing back the glasses.

"Yes, and it is war," was the reply.

Jack was impatient to get back to Hougomont. His friends were there, and he heard the Duke say that Napoleon would hurl his men against the old chateau. The youth wanted to be with Neville when the storm broke.

"You can go now," said Wellington, addressing him, and at the same time he handed him a return dispatch which he promptly concealed on his person. "I don't think you will have any adventures going back," and Jack, saluting the great man, turned his horse's head towards Hougomont.

There was one thing he longed to do, and that was to acquaint the girl at the farmhouse with the fate of the man whom she had concealed. As he cantered away he looked back and saw the little group on the ridge slowly dissolve. When the farmhouse came in sight, he drew toward it and halted at the door. The same girl came forward and stared at him with astonishment in her eyes.

"You see I'm back," said Jack. "The man did not fare so well."

Her answering look was a question.

"I got the upper hand of the rascal," continued Jack, for his victory filled him with satisfaction. "I guess the Iron Duke settled with him for his attempt to rob me."

Her cheeks went pale.

"Good-by," laughed Jack, breaking in upon her thoughts. "I fancy we shall finish the Little Corporal forever this time."

As he trotted away he heard a sharp report behind him, and a bullet clipped a lock of his hair.

"A miss is as good as a mile," he chuckled, for a moment thinking of turning back. "I will pay my respects to the Belgian miss after the battle."

Then his thoughts recurred to Max Moritz, or the man whom he thought was Napoleon's spy.

The return ride, as Napoleon had prophesied, was uneventful, and at length Jack reported to Colonel Willoughby.

"So they tried to plunder you?" smiled his uncle, after reading the dispatch.

"Yes, sir."

"But they failed?"

"Aye, that they did."

"You're in luck, my boy. The Duke speaks highly of you in his dispatch. I am not sorry that I brought you out."

Jack now began to search the chateau and its surroundings for the man he wanted to find. He came across Neville, who said he had seen no suspicious person.

"I could not be mistaken," remarked Jack, with emphasis. "I will never forget the eyes we saw in Brussels."

Half an hour later he stopped suddenly in his tracks and gazed at the very man he was seeking. There he stood in the uniform of a fusilier, weapon in hand, as though eager to be led to the fray.

"That's the fellow!" ejaculated our young soldier. "Now, how shall I circumvent him?"

He drew nearer to the suspected one, but kept where he himself could not be readily observed. Suddenly the supposed Moritz turned on his heel and tramped into the chateau itself. Jack instantly plunged after him, but lost sight of him beyond the main entrance.

"He may have suspected my design," he thought, as he looked around. "The spy is up to some meanness, but he ought to know that he is risking his life every second."

All at once the thunder of artillery smote his ears. The French had opened on Hougomont. Jack listened for a minute and then turned back. The chateau was being struck by the ponderous balls rained against it. The soldiers were rushing to their places, and he knew that he would have to give over his pursuit for the present.

"We're in for it at last," shouted Old Moustache, as he passed Jack, his eyes aglow with the enthusiasm of battle. "Come along, Jack, and we will fight side by side."

The thunder of the guns increased. Presently thousands of the enemy were seen to be rushing down upon the buildings. The first tug of war had come. Hougomont was defended by but three thousand men under Major Macdonnell, a gallant Scotchman, while there were fully ten thousand Frenchmen assailing it.

Suddenly Jack felt a sting in his arm, and blood trickled down his hand.

"Hit, eh?" grinned Old Moustache, looking for a moment at the boy, whose face went a little pale. "That is a wound of glory."

Jack continued to look at the blood, hardly knowing what to do.

"I'll go back and have my wound dressed," said he, and he turned into the chateau where the surgeons were busy.

As he was being attended to he looked around, and his eye caught sight of the man he had lost but a short time before. He was standing against the wall watching the surgeons at work. Jack went over to him with his bandaged arm. Their eyes met.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded. "Why aren't you with your comrades?"

The fellow scowled viciously.

"What is it to you where I am?" he hissed. "You have no authority over me."

"I remember seeing you before," Jack went on, paying no heed to the man's last words. "I recall seeing you in Brussels."

"You lie, young sir," was the response. "I haven't been in Brussels in six months."

"Aren't you Max Moritz, so-called?"

"I am not, sir. And even if I were, it would be no concern of yours."

The words, with the speaker's manners, told Jack that he was not mistaken.

"You are a French spy," accused the boy, becoming bolder, although he saw he was dealing with a desperate man. "I have this from Trix, whom you may know."

At this the fellow turned pale.

"See here," he cried, advancing upon the boy, who stood firm. "I'll wring your chicken neck in a moment if you don't shut your mouth. I won't be insulted by a jackanapes——"

"We'll see who you are," retorted Jack, at the same time drawing his pistol. "We won't have spies in our camp."

Quick as thought the weapon was knocked from his grasp, and the man bolted like a rocket.

"Hold on there!" cried a young officer. "That man belongs to our army. Don't you see his uniform?"

But Jack in his eagerness was already out of hearing distance, and his desire to keep the French spy in sight lent speed to his legs. Out into the court in front of the chateau he dashed, looking everywhere for his quarry.

The battle was now raging with terrific fury. Cannon balls were striking the walls, and men were falling on every hand. The British were firing through the loopholes, and the French were paying dearly for their assault.

"I told you they would fight," cried Old Moustache, coming up to the youth, his face blackened with powder. "This is the hottest place I've been in since Austerlitz."

"I want to find my man first," answered Jack, thinking of nothing but the French spy.

"What man?"

"Max Moritz, the French spy."

Old Moustache started.

"Is that fellow here?" he exclaimed. "I owe him a little debt, too."

"I saw him but a moment ago."

"In Hougomont?"

"Nowhere else."

"Which way did he go?"

"He rushed out into the melee."

Jack was about to reply when a part of the besieged fell back before the scathing fire.

"Yonder he is!" cried Jack, singling out a certain figure. "That man in the fusilier uniform."

Old Moustache darted away, but the next second he threw up his hands and tumbled to the earth. Jack stopped.

"I've got you now!" exclaimed the hunted man, as he thrust a pistol into the boy's face. "Take this with my compliments!" and the flash of flame blinded Jack as he reeled away.

CHAPTER IX.

JACK SAVES THE ARMY.

ALMOST instantly there came a lull in the battle.

Stunned by the shot that had nearly taken his life, Jack Winslow lay unconscious for a few minutes. The French had been driven back by the gallantry of the men within the walls of Hougomont. Neville, who had seen Jack fall, rushed to his assistance.

"The man, the spy, Max Moritz!" were the young Guardsman's first words.

Neville looked hastily around and shook his head.

"We'll get the fellow yet!" cried Jack, through clinched teeth. "I owe him one for that shot."

Just then the call to battle was heard again. It rose above the fearful cannonade of the maddened enemy. Old Moustache, who was thought to have been killed, staggered forward and took his place in the old ranks.

On came the French, a long, sweeping line of bayonets and skakos that made them look taller than they really were. They were making for the main entrance, and it was seen that Hougomont was to receive the most desperate charge of the day. Jack ran to his place and caught his uncle's eye.

"Back!" cried Colonel Willoughby to him. "You will never get to spend that five thousand pounds if you rush in yonder."

"I came out to fight, not to become rich," was the reply, and Jack launched himself into the midst of the chateau's defenders.

"Close the door!" rang out a dozen voices, and men darted forward for that purpose, for the French were already assaulting the portal with the fury of demons.

Some of the enemy actually got into the chateau, but by dint of heroism they were bayoneted, and the heavy door was swung to and the rest kept out.

"That was well done!" cried Jack, as he turned to Neville, who was panting heavily.

"Yes, but can we hold Hougomont?"

"We must, or the day is lost!" was the retort.

For the third time the French were driven back, and now they opened on the outer buildings of the chateau, which were soon on fire.

"Some one must reach our men in the orchard!" cried Major Macdonnell.

"I will go," answered Jack, appearing in front of him, standing at salute.

The giant Scotchman looked down at the young soldier rather disdainfully.

"Who are you, sir?" he asked.

"Jack Winslow of the Life Guardsmen."

"By my soul! you look brave," was the reply. "Go tell Colonel Clinton that the orchard must be held at all hazards. I think the back route is the safest," and Jack darted off.

Leaping a low stone wall behind the chateau, Jack was soon on his way to the orchard, which was not far away. The smoke and the roar of the battle were around him. The very ground trembled beneath his feet.

When he got through the terrible pall of smoke he saw the troops in the orchard fighting for their lives. It was a hand-to-hand conflict waged with the determination of madmen. Already the ground he was traversing had been fought over, and everywhere lay the dying and the dead.

All at once a figure rose at Jack's feet, and he recoiled with a cry.

"You here?" he exclaimed, gazing at the person before him.

"Why not?" was the answer. "It is my duty to help the helpless," and a smile gathered at the lips of Trix, the pretty canteen bearer.

She looked prettier than ever in her uniform, though it was stained with blood.

"I've just seen your old enemy," the girl continued, as Jack was about to turn away.

"M—old—enemy?"

"Yes, Max Moritz."

The name sent a thrill through the young Guardsman's frame.

"He was running back to the chateau," she went on. "That man is in the pay of Napoleon."

"I have ample proof of that," Jack said. "I will hunt him down when I return."

"Beware that the tiger does not turn hunter."

To reach Colonel Clinton and deliver his message was not as difficult as Jack had feared. Then he turned to retrace his steps. Neville was the first to greet him as he re-entered the chateau.

"Moritz is here, Jack."

"Where?" and Jack glanced anxiously around.

"He must be in the chateau itself, for he entered it but a moment ago."

"Come, then. We are not needed here just now."

The two boys plunged into the battle-scarred building.

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in one of the underground cells," suggested Neville.

"True. We will look for him there."

They made at once for the stairway which led into the bowels of the earth, and opened the door at the foot of it.

"We can't use a light," Jack said. "It would betray us," and they proceeded in the darkness.

Suddenly Neville clutched his companion's arm.

"I hear voices ahead," he whispered.

"So do I. Moritz may have encountered the ogre of Hougomont. We must move cautiously now."

They had already drawn their pistols, and their fingers were resting on the triggers.

A few yards farther on they halted again.

Voices were heard, but they were so indistinct that they could not locate the speakers.

"They have met," said Jack, in low tones. "I can distinguish the ogre's voice."

They leaned forward eagerly and listened with all ears.

"What's that you say?" they heard Moritz ask.

"There's powder enough here to do it," was the reply. "There must be fifty kegs and——"

"That's enough if we can but find a place of safety."

"As to that have no fears. I know this place like a book. The train is already laid——"

"Good! Come, then. We will let Napoleon's men into Hougomont by the cutest trick ever played on the Iron Duke."

In the darkness where they stood the faces of the boys went deathly white. The villains were going to blow up the chateau and consign its gallant defenders to the most terrible of deaths.

Receding footsteps told Jack and Neville that the pair had gone to their villainous work. They advanced again.

"We must save the garrison," said Jack, thrilled anew by the awful condition of affairs. "Even if we lose our lives, Hougomont must not fall into the hands of Bonaparte!"

"I am with you to the end, Jack," heroically answered Neville.

The footfalls had now ceased to reach their ears, but this silence did not deter them. They could only find their way by touching the cold wall that inclosed them, but they went rapidly forward, every sense on the alert.

"Halt!" said Jack.

Straight ahead was the flicker of a little light. The boys held their breath as they looked. The meager flame revealed two forms near the ground, and gradually they saw a heap of kegs which must be the hidden powder which was to do the deadly work.

"Light the train and let us be off," they heard the spy say. "Make it short, but yet long enough to enable us to save our precious lives."

"That's what I've done. It is all right now," and the candle moved along the floor.

Jack raised his pistol arm and leveled the weapon at one of the men.

"Don't miss," breathed Neville. "The safety of the whole army is in our hands."

The following instant the weapon cracked and a stooping figure sprang into the air.

"Here they come!" cried Jack.

There was a rush of feet and a volley of oaths, and the two boys were thrown against the wall by the impact. It was some little time before they could recover.

"Look! the fuse is burning!" shouted Jack leaping forward.

Sparks were dancing before his distended eyes. The deadly fuse was within an inch of the lowest keg.

With another cry our young Guardsman threw himself upon the ground and clutched wildly at the sputtering thing. He forgot everything—even his own life—at thought of the terrible consequences should the fire reach the powder. The fuse burned his hand, but he tore it loose and threw it away.

"Saved!" cried Neville.

Jack could not speak. He was standing in the darkness like one obsessed by some terrible dream. He was roused into life by the thunder of battle.

"Back to our posts!" cried he, and they turned and darted down the stygian corridor.

"Heavens!" he ejaculated a moment afterward. "The door of this passage is shut. We are prisoners!"

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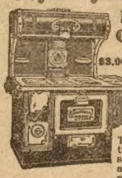

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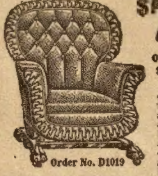
This is the great range that has caused such a sensation as the most amazing bargain ever offered. Easily worth $35. Yet our price is only $23.85 (without reservoir, $19.95). Every feature is complete and perfect. Oven is of same proportions and construction features found in the very highest priced ranges and measures 18 inches square. The body is made of Spear's celebrated P.P.P. rust-resisting steel. Full nickel trimmed. Sold on 30 days' Free Kitchen Trial.

30-Day Home Trial

on any Household Article

This Turkish Rocker



Order No. D1019

$7.85 Easy Terms

Only 75c Monthly
$1.25 with Order

A new, large, overstuff Turkish rocker with a deep spring seat, beautifully ruffled front and back. Covering is high-grade Sylvan leather well tufted. Made with a heavy claw foot platform, easy rocking springs. A wonderful value. And remember

Satisfaction is Guaranteed

by Spear on this fine rocker. **Shipped on 30 days' trial. Price $7.85. Terms, $1.25 cash with order, balance payable 75c monthly.**

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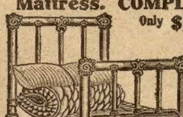

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This handsome, complete Metal Bed Outfit, consisting of heavy, perfectly constructed Iron Bed, any color, 4 feet 6 inches wide; a good woven wire spring with steel supports and tubular steel frame; 50-pound cotton top mattress; 2 pillows.

This is one of the great bargains that has made Spear famous the world over for the most remarkable low furniture prices to be had anywhere.

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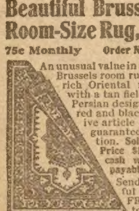
You are perfectly safe in ordering this beautiful bed, or any other article, direct from this advertisement, as Spear gives you an absolute 30-Day Home Trial and if you are not satisfied refunds your money under Spear's Special Guarantee Plan. Or, you can send right away for Spear's big Free Catalog, full of complete descriptions of every article, if you are not ready to order direct.

Beautiful Brussels Room-Size Rug, Now $1.50 Cash with Order

75c Monthly **Order No. D4753**



An unusual value in a full 9x12 tapestry Brussels room rug. The design is a rich Oriental medallion pattern with a tan field intermixed with Persian designs in brown, green, red and black. A most attractive article and one which we guarantee to give satisfaction. Sold on 30 days' trial. Price $10.45. Terms, $1.50 cash with order, balance payable 75c monthly.

Send for this wonderful rug bargain or the FREE Book, or both, today sure.

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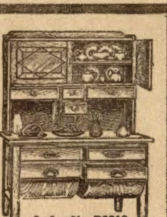
Record Low Price on a Kitchen Cabinet 75c Monthly



Order No. D2813

Never before has such a kitchen cabinet been offered at a price as low as what we quote on this one. The base top measures 25 x 42 inches. Made with two large sliding bins, two cutlery drawers and a large kneading board. The top has a large double china compartment fitted with art glass doors and four roomy spice drawers. Construction throughout of select golden oak with high gloss finish. **Sold on 30 days' trial. Price $8.95. Terms, $1.50 cash with order, balance payable 75c monthly.**

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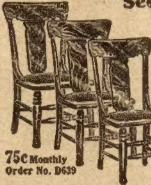
A man from Ohio wrote Spear of Pittsburgh, saying: "I wish you could see my home today. We are plain, working people, but there is not a millionaire living who enjoys greater comforts than we do in our home." That's the kind of thing that shows the value of Spear's credit plan. He helps you to beautify your home without any strain on your pocketbook, without asking unreasonable questions, without letting your neighbors know your business.

See These Good Dining Room Chairs

Six for $8.95 Easy Terms

No. D639-X—Each $1.55. No. D639—6 for $8.95. $1.50 Cash Balance 75c Monthly



75c Monthly
Order No. D639

A remarkable new dining chair with high plain panel back, continuous back posts and neat, turned front posts and spindles. Genuine golden oak, gloss finish. The construction throughout is first-class in every respect. Seats are heavily upholstered and covered with chase leather, one of the best imitations of genuine leather used for upholstering. You may buy one or set of six.

Send for Spear's Big Bargain Book. It is FREE. A post card brings it, or fill out and mail coupon below. It will tell you how to buy any piece of furniture you want, or furnish every room in your home handsomely and completely on the most liberal and easiest charge account credit plan ever devised. No need to scrape and save for months and years. You don't need cash to buy of Spear.

Amazing Bargain on a Select Library Table

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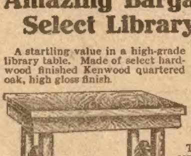
Only 65c Monthly



Order No. D3703

This table has been especially designed for our trade and we are introducing it at an extremely low price. It is made with a large roomy drawer and the top measures 28 x 42 in. Finished in beautiful Kenwood Quartered Oak. Shipped on 30 days' trial. Your money back if not satisfied. Try it 30 days. Price $7.25. Terms, $1.00 cash with order, balance payable 65c monthly. Order direct from this page.

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65c Monthly

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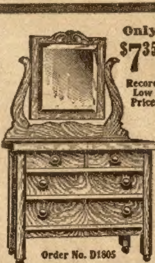

Order No. D1805

To introduce this neat, new dresser we are quoting a remarkably low price. It is made of hardwood beautifully finished in Kenwood quartered oak and highly glossed. Has very large roomy drawers with wood knobs. The top measures 21 x 38 in. and the French beveled plate mirror measures 16 x 20 in. The standards are gracefully curved and the mirror frame neatly ornamented. **Shipped on 30 days' trial. Price $7.35. Terms, $1.00 cash with order, balance payable 65c monthly. Order direct from this page.**

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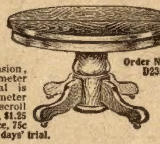
75c Monthly Try This Handsome Extension Table for Thirty Days at Home

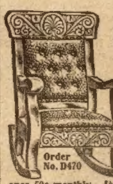


Order No. D2359

An entirely new high-grade extension table, made of select genuine oak finished with a rich golden gloss finish. Top is made with 6 foot extension, measures 42 in. in diameter when closed. Pedestal is heavy stock 8 in. in diameter and made with colonial scroll feet. **Price $8.65. Terms, $1.25 cash with order. Balance, 75c monthly. Shipped on 30 days' trial.**

You Get a Long Time to Pay for Beautiful Chair

Only 50c Monthly



Order No. D470

A new high-grade parlor rocker, graceful design, hardwood frame, embossed front and top panels. May be had in either genuine golden oak or mahoganized birch finish. The covering is a high grade Spanish leatherette made with a deep spring seat and neatly tufted back. Sold under our guarantee. **Shipped on 30 days' trial. Price $5.65. Terms, 75c cash with order. Balance 50c monthly.** It is

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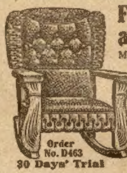
Get This Book

Fine Rocker at a Bargain



Order No. D463
30 Days' Trial

Most attractive parlor rocker ever produced at such a low price.

$3.65 only

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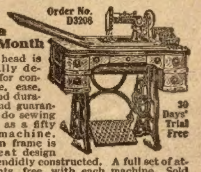
$1 a Month



Order No. D3206

30 Days' Trial Free

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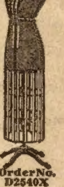
ADJUSTABLE Dress Form

75c Monthly



Order No. D2540X

Spear's Latest "Crown" Adjustable Dress Form is a wonder. Makes dressmaking easy and a pleasure. Helps you to dress in up-to-date fashion at small cost. Eliminates the discomfort of being fitted. Quickly solves every difficulty and does away with guesswork, disappointment, and saves expense and waste of valuable material.

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